

## INDIVIDUAL WORK FOR INDIVIDUALS.

BY H. CLAY TRUMBULL, D.D.

ACCORDING to Oriental thought and custom, one with whom you "break bread," or with whom you sit at meat, is, by that very fact, in covenant with you, and you have sacred duties toward him that must not be shirked or evaded. Yet many a Christian in a Christian community will sit at the same table with another, as a fellow boarder, for weeks or months, without knowing anything of his religious or spiritual views or wants. Both will talk freely on ordinary subjects, but the subject of chief importance is not named or considered. Is this right? Will any Christian say that it is? Is it right toward either party? How much is lost, on both sides, by such a course?

For a long time my family and I lived at a boarding-house in a New England city. There was during that period a season of special religious interest, or a general revival, in that city. There sat at the same table with us a gentleman and his wife, who, as we knew, were not confessing Christians, or church members, and had never expressed to us any particular interest in the revival movement in the city. One noonday I suggested to my wife that we ought to speak to our table neighbors personally on the subject, and urge them to surrender themselves to Christ. As she agreed with me as to our duty, I proposed that, while I would go up to the gentleman's place of business, and have a loving talk with him, she should seek out the wife in her room, and plead with her for Christ. This was agreed to. Then we knelt together and asked God's blessing on our efforts, and on those in whose spiritual welfare we were interested.

The gentleman was a bank officer. I called there just after bank hours, knowing that he would then be disengaged. As I asked him for an interview, he invited me into the directors' room, and closed the door. When I spoke of my loving interest in him, and of my purpose in calling, he burst into tears, and said that he was so glad I had come. Then he told me how he had longed, day after day, for some one to speak to him on this subject. When men came in who were prominent and active in the prayer-meetings, he had tried, in vain, to lead the conversation to the point of a personal word, but had always failed. How adroit some Christians are in avoiding the subject of personal religion in business places and in business hours! I found this man longing to be helped into the kingdom, and glad to learn the way. That was an ever-to-be-remembered conversation for Christ.

When I went back to the house, at the close of the afternoon, my wife told me, with a cheerful face, of her experience. After my leaving her, as she was preparing to go to the room of the wife she had on her heart, there was a knock at her door. As she opened the door, that wife came in, and, bursting into tears, she asked if her friend wouldn't help her to Christ. She had longed to be spoken to by some one, and now she could bear

this no longer. The two wives went on their knees together, and they rose with glad and grateful hearts.

That husband and wife soon stood up and confessed their faith together, as they connected themselves with the Church. They were active for Christ in all the years until they entered into rest. And their children were prominent and useful in Christ's service after them.—*Sunday-school Times.*

## PRAYER AND FAITH AS ELEMENTS IN REVIVAL WORK.

BY THE REV. ROBERT STEPHENS.

IN one of the English villages of the coast of Cornwall, close by the sea shore, there is a Methodist church. The membership of that church are of the poorer class of people, but most of them are faithful in their attendance upon all services of the church.

Some years since there were connected with this church four young men. They worked together in the ship-building yard. Their place of work was about one mile and a half from their home. In going to and from their work they had opportunity to walk each way to talk to each other concerning the condition of the church.

In one of the conversations, one evening, one of the young men suggested that it was time that the church had a revival. This led to the question, What can we do to bring about a revival in our church? After many things had been suggested it was agreed that they, the four young men, would pray at a certain time of the day for a revival spirit.

It was thought best that they pray at the same hour of the day for the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon the church and the unsaved. The hour settled on was at five o'clock in the morning. They had to be up at that hour to get into the shipbuilding yard at 6 a.m. They parted from each other, and the next morning at five a.m., true to their covenant, they offered up their prayers for God's blessing to come upon their church. Day after day, as opportunity offered, they would speak to each other concerning the prospect of answer to their prayers. They never doubted that God would send an answer to their pleadings.

Some weeks passed away, and one Sunday evening, as they were on their way to the regular preaching service, there being no revival meeting held, one of the young men said to the other, "Well, how is your faith?" He replied, "I believe we are going to have a good meeting." Said the other: "My faith is stronger than that. I have confidence in God that this night sinners will be converted." This was his faith. There were no signs in way of meetings being held. It was the regular preaching service, and yet this young man was going to church with faith so strong in God that he could say, "We are going to see sinners converted to-night." The service commenced. Prayer was over, the preacher rose and announced his text. It was, "Quench not the Spirit." The preacher did his duty. He preached as a man sent of God to plead with the unsaved to turn at

once to God for salvation. When he was through with his sermon and had closed the preaching service, he invited all who could to remain at the prayer meeting.

As soon as the prayer meeting was opened the preacher invited any who wanted to be saved to come at once to the altar and find Christ. In response to the call seven went to the altar, sought and found Christ. It was a blessed meeting.

I see still the face of that young man now as he walked to the front of the church to take part in the work of pointing the sinners to Christ, beaming with joy over the victory of faith.

The meeting did not close; it went on night after night until eighty persons were blessedly saved; the old church members wonderfully revived, and the little village stirred by the outpouring of the Holy Ghost. It was a wonderful meeting. God is ready and willing now to respond to the pleadings in prayer of the few, and to yield to their "We will not let thee go."

The great hindrance to a great revival is lack of pleading and lack of faith. The old prophet prayed, and while he prayed he sent his servant to see if there was a sign of rain. Let the Christian Church use these two great elements of power, prayer and faith, and we will witness shocks of power and see wonderful revivals. But Jesus to-day stands hindered in His great work of saving men because of the lack of faith. Let us ask God to stir the Church into active prayer and waiting faith. The revival will then commence.—*Central Christian Advocate.*

## PLOUGHING BY THE COW.

AN Irishman, who was a green hand at farming, was set to ploughing by his employer, and instructed, in order that his first furrow might be straight, to "plough at a mark." Pat, unfortunately, chose a cow on the slope of an adjoining hill as his mark, and, as the animal moved quietly along, feeding, his furrow followed her in a long, parenthesis curve. When Pat came to look back, he was so bewildered that he unhitched his horses and hastened home for further instructions.

Pat's trouble was exactly what many of us experience who are trying to plough straight furrows by the help of variable marks. We take some world-serving, professing Christian as our example, perhaps, and try to build up a consistent character by living just as well as he does. The result is, as might have been expected, anything but a reliable furrow to straighten the rest by.

Or perhaps it is a vacillating purpose, or a consciously imperfect ideal, that we take for our ploughing mark. The result is always the same. We must have true, firm guides, if we are going to run straight furrows. Better no example than an unreliable one. Better no ideal than one we know to be unworthy of a true soul's aspiration. When God sets you to ploughing, choose something reliable to plough by. Don't do as Pat did, and choose a cow. Or if, like him, in the innocence of your heart, you do choose such a mark, stop ploughing at it when you see it begin to move.—*Zion's Herald.*