

## Young People's Column

### THE WEAK BROTHER

Paul has much to say about the weak brother. The substance of his teaching is that those who are strong ought to be careful not to harm the weak brother in any way. They should be willing for his sake to make sacrifices of personal rights and privileges. We may not ignore him in the asserting of our own liberty. The great ship in the channel may not go plowing on its way with no regard for the smaller ship pursuing his course must think of the little men that are in his way. We may not live for ourselves alone. If you are one in a company of men travelling together, and are strong and swift-footed, you may not set the pace for the party; you must hold your strength in restraint to accommodate your speed to the weak and slow-stepping members. The strong must help the weak, must be gentle toward them, patient with them.

There are men of ambition who harden their hearts against every appeal of human weakness, frailty or suffering. They pay no attention to the needs that come before their eyes. They run their business on lines of strict justice, perhaps, but justice untempered by love or mercy. They put no kindness into their dealings. They pay smallest wages and exact the utmost of toil and service. They never turn aside to help a fainting one. They tell you there is no room for sentiment in business. They reach their goal—they become rich and great; but they have crushed the weak under their feet.

There are other men who turn aside continually to help the feeble and the fainting, to be a comfort to the weak. They may not get along so well in the competition for power, money or fame, but no weak brother perishes through their ambition. They leave no wreckage of little boats behind them in the water as they move on in majestic course.

There are a great many weak brothers in the world. Some have feeble health. Some suffer from the infirmities of age. But is not the strong man, strong for the very purpose of helping the brother who is weak? The mountains minister to the plains below, to every little valley, to every flower and blade of grass, to every beast and bird. "The Alps were not uplifted merely to be gazed at and admired by pleasure-loving tourists, but to feed the Rhine and to nourish the teeming cities on its banks." God does not give certain men strength and position, fine personality and great influence, merely that they may stand up high among their fellows, towering above them, to be admired and honored. They have their strength and their ability that they may be a blessing to those who are less highly favored.

In almost every community there is one who is intellectually weak, a foolish boy or man, or a girl or woman who lacks ability to take her place among her sisters. Sometimes such a person is made the sport of neighbors, of those who are bright and talented, laughed at, even treated cruelly. It is a pitiable sight to see one who is feeble-minded, who has not wit enough to take his place among others, buffeted and abused by those to whom God has given good mental abilities. It is beautiful to see a bright, manly boy become the champion and friend of another boy who is

almost imbecile protecting him from the sport of others. It is told of Edward Eggleston that in his boyhood he and his companions were forming a literary society. The membership they determined should include only the best boys and young men of the place. None who were undesirable should be admitted. There was one boy in the neighborhood who was mentally defective, who greatly desired to join the society, that he might learn to "speak pieces," he said. Most of the boys laughed at the suggestion that he should be admitted. But young Eggleston, with a manly earnestness, favored receiving him. "We have no right," he said, "to keep all our good things to ourselves. This poor boy will do us no harm, and it will please him, and it may do him good." He pleaded so earnestly for the boy that he was admitted. It made him very happy, and he became fairly bright.

This was a Christly thing to do. Jesus would have done just what Edward Eggleston did. We should seek to get the lesson into all our conduct. If there is a bashful girl in the neighborhood, or a shy, retiring boy, these are the ones to whom Jesus would have the young people show the greatest attention in their social life. Those for whom most persons do not care are the ones for whom Jesus would care the most tenderly, if He were here. Those who need the most help are the ones Jesus Himself helps the most.

Some people are weak in their character. The Master was infinitely patient with those who stumbled and fell. On His ears, as He stood in the place of trial, wearing the thorn crown, fell the words of bitter denial from the lips of His chief disciple, piercing His heart like thorns. But He spoke not one condemning word. He only looked toward Peter with grief, not with anger, winning him back to loyalty. Think what would have been the result if Jesus had not been thus loving and patient with Peter in those terrible hours! Peter never would have been restored. What a loss it would have been to the church in all ages if he had perished!

Some men say, "I can not care for my weak brother. I can not like him. I can not have any patience with him. He is narrow and bigoted and has so many scruples that there is no getting along with him. Or, he is not bright, and I can not enjoy being with him or doing anything for him. Or, he is rude and low in his tastes. I can not be the weak brother's friend."

"For whose sake Christ died," seems to answer all these difficulties. Since Christ loved the weak brother enough to die for him, we ought to love him enough to be kind to him, to be his friend, at least not to cause him to perish. This is a tremendous motive. The fact that Jesus died for the weak brother suggests his worth in the sight of God.

This is the vision we have in Paul's words: "The weak brother perisheth for whom Christ died, perisheth through thy strength, thy goodness." He is weak, and perisheth for want of your love, he for whom Christ died. How the thought startles us! Surely we can not think unkindly, harshly, or neglectfully any more of the weak brother when we remember that he is the man for whom Christ died.

They are all about us—these weak brothers. They are unable to stand in the front rank, to do great things. They are weak in their disposition, full of scruples, not easy to

get along with. They are weak in their character—easily tempted, falling back rapidly into the old, bad ways. They are weak in their business life—never getting on. We need more and more to become helpers of the weak! Let them find love in us, if they have never found it in any one else. Let the sweetest and the strongest be the gentlest. Let us go slower, because they cannot go fast. Do not get vexed with their scruples or unreasonable ways. Be sure that no weak brother shall never perish through your superior strength and knowledge. Remember always that Christ died for the weak brother.—Sunday School Times.

### CORRESPONDENCE

Springfield, Mass.

Dear Brother Trafton:

Enclosed you will find money order for renewal of the Highway. Please send it to our new address. We look for it coming as we do a letter from home.

We like it here but miss the little church at home. Still we are glad we can have Jesus with us where ever we are. We thank God for His goodness to us through the past winter.

Yours truly,

MRS KENNETH A. NORTHROP

St. John, N. B.

Dear Brother Trafton:

Have felt led to send my testimony to the Highway. Am glad this morning that I have found he whom my soul loveth, my precious Lord. He fills and thrills my soul with his majestic sweetness.

Surely it is like a well of water springing up, and also we read of rivers of living water. Praise his name. It is our privilege to be in the river and the river in us. "And all shall be healed whither so ever these waters flow." Let us go down, down, where he can fill us with himself.

I can understand now why "Mary" sought him at the tomb, while it was yet dark. Surely he had become the lover of her soul. No fear in love. She thought not of the darkness or the Roman soldiers that guard the tomb. She was seeking her precious Lord. Praise His name. She found the stone already rolled away. And he calling her by name sent her away with a glad message that comes down to us today—a risen Christ.

Oh, if I could only tell it as I feel it this morning, I am sure some one would fall in love with him too. So glad my future is in his hands and I know he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him. Bless His matchless name.

MRS. MAUD PARLEE

The God of Israel, the Saviour, is sometimes a God that hideth Himself, but never a God that absenteth Himself; sometimes in the dark, but never at a distance.—Matthew Henry.

"The Bible is to be lived, not merely believed. It is not sufficient to know its ideals; they have to be made part of one's life; they have to be prayed in and lived out. Prayer will impress them, and conduct must express them. Christianity is not, and never has been a philosophy of life; it is itself a life, a present fact, a vital force."—The Free Methodist.