

## UNBREAKABLE TESTIMONY.

By Rev. R. G. Macbeth, M.A.

Nearly two thousand years have gone by since Paul, the heroic old missionary, gave the world a distinct opportunity to put an end to the Christian faith. A wonderful challenge was that when he, the veteran soldier of Christ, threw down the gauntlet and said: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain." No system of religion has ever faced men and staked so much on an assertion of fact as the Christian religion did in this instance. When he made this statement the Apostle put himself into the hands of the enemy without fear and his confidence was not mistaken. The challenge has never been met, though sceptics throughout all these centuries would, doubtless, have availed themselves of any perceptible weakness in the armor of the faith.

Paul's conviction as to the truth of the resurrection of Christ was intense because it rested on indisputable evidence. He had himself seen the Risen Lord as he tells us more than once. The testimony of his changed life is moral proof for the truth of this assertion. It is inconceivable that he, the brilliant law-student of Gamaliel, singled out by birth, citizenship and attainments for a foremost place in the Empire would have suddenly dropped all his brilliant prospects and entered upon a life of unutterable suffering, without some adequate reason. That reason he gives us in the account of his personal meeting with the Risen Christ.

It is both interesting and profitable to note the testimony of Paul's letters to the fact of the resurrection. His four great letters, Romans I. and II., Corinthians and Galatians, have never been disputed by the most advanced destructive critics. They are admitted by every one to be both authentic and genuine and they were written a quarter of a century after the crucifixion. Even by the rules of evidence in law courts as to "ancient documents," we must accept the testimony of these letters on matters concerning which they are competent to speak. Everyone knows how peculiarly valuable letters are as documentary evidence corroborating contemporaneous records. Besides that, letters reveal character and the best part of most biographies is that in which letters are given. These are indices to the character of the writer. Viewed in this way, Paul's letters show him to have been a man of conspicuous candour and truthfulness. But letters also reveal mental ability, and if anyone is disposed to discount Paul's testimony on the ground that he may have been weakened, let him turn and study the letter to the Romans. For the first eight chapters, Paul is reasoning out one great subject, and the intelligent reader of these compact steps in logic will confess that the Apostle was a master-mind at whose feet ordinary mortals must sit and learn the construction of an argument. In these letters we have the most splendid testimony to the fact of the resurrection, which is the truth closest to us at the Easter-tide.

We have Paul's examination-in-chief, as the lawyers would call it. But we must not forget that for twenty years he was cross-examined by the most relentless prosecution that any man suffered on this side of the Cross. Neither kings, nor courts, nor starvings, nor scourgings, nor perils without number, could shake the testimony of this man. Even in the dungeon at Rome, with its cruel and disheartening environment, his faith burned with undimmed lustre. And when his grey head was under the battle-axe of Nero, he chanted the death song of a conquering faith and stepped from the witness box into a martyr's grave with his testimony to the Risen Lord unbroken and undisturbed.—Paris, Ont.

## FAMOUS SISTERS OF GREAT MEN.

The attachment displayed by the sisters of many notable men furnishes some of the most interesting records in the pages of biography. Not infrequently this attachment has been of an almost ideal kind, where identity of blood has proved itself a force superior to all the ups and downs of time and chance. Celebrities, for example, like Byron, Lamb, Wordsworth, and others freely acknowledge how much their success is attributable to a sister's influence. Was it not Renan who said, "My invaluable friend," when recalling the services of his beloved sister Henriette. In the days of his toil and struggle? And so it may be observed that relationships of this affectionate nature always excite feelings of genuine interest and appreciation, quite apart from our estimate of the work accomplished by their aid.

Admirable was the devotion of Neander's sister to her brother. Neander, the famous church historian, and his sister lived inseparable all their lives, and when he was ill she was accustomed to sleep on a mattress at his door, to be ready if he required any attention. She is credited with having inspired his Church History, and also with having written a great part of the work.

Of Caroline Herschel, a most remarkable woman, much might be written, in regard both of her own achievements and the untiring services which she rendered her brother. For half a century, according to her diary, Caroline Herschel applied herself every night to the study of the heavens, showing, says Professor Lodge, "a quite incredible fierceness of application," and she had the honour of discovering many celestial bodies. This interest, however, was eclipsed by her fidelity to her brother, whose unexampled success in the systematic study of the heavens was largely due to the zeal and sympathy which she inspired. When Sir James South presented Caroline Herschel with the Astronomical Society's gold medal he eulogised the part she had in sharing her brother's privations and labours. While Herschel was at the telescope Caroline always sat by with a star atlas and a notebook, and faithfully wrote his observations throughout the night, it being her further duty to write them out at length for subsequent use. Careless of her own fame, if perchance her brother's might increase, Caroline Herschel also deserves remembrance as a pioneer in that field of astronomical work which such women as Mrs. Somerville and Miss Agnes Clarke have since cultivated to excellent purpose.

Another delightful attachment was that of Dorothy Wordsworth to her brother the poet. Dorothy Wordsworth set up housekeeping with her brother in 1795 in Dorsetshire, and lived with him for upwards of the next half century. The marriage of the poet only widened the circle of her love. Gifted with a sensitive nature, and power of expression scarcely second to the poet's, of her own choice she never married, but gave herself entirely for her brother, and walked with him amongst the mountains beyond her strength to help him to see everything that could be turned to poetic use. "She had," it is noted, "her reward in a love that never wavered, and that remains enshrined in some of the noblest verse in English literature." It was very fitting that Dorothy Wordsworth, on her decease, should be laid at the right side of the poet's grave in Grasmere churchyard.

Our neighbors across the Channel likewise supply us with some charming examples of a similar kind of fellowship. Jacqueline Pascal lived on the most devoted terms with her brother, Blaise Pascal, the philosopher and mathematician. Again, the story of the affection of Renan's sister is one of the most charming of this writer's life. Her devotion was the whole motive spring of her life, and its unselfishness delightful. When Renan announced to her his intended marriage she was inconsolable, but ultimately saw the futility of her attitude. Subsequent to his marriage with Madeleine Scheff the sister

had her place in the brother's home, and shared not a little of the happiness of former days. If we turn to the French novelist, Balzac, we learn of his ardent attachment to his sister, Laura Surville, whom he loved with rare affection, and to whom he opened, throughout his life, all the hopes and sorrows of his heart. Similarly Fanny Mendelssohn's loyal devotion to her celebrated brother Felix is well known, and, no less, the brother's unbounded regard for her. The sister's letters addressed to him belong to the choice treasures of epistolatory literature.

Among English writers the effect on character and career of a sister's influence has many pleasant illustrations. In Charles Lamb's case the inspiration not only of literature but of life; and, in that of Wordsworth, the actual impulse of many a poem, while Byron's "Stanzas to Augusta" are fragrant with tributes of affection. What could be more exquisite than the lines: "My sister! my sweet sister! if a name Dearer and purer were, it should be thine."

Every reader of that classic biography—Macaulay's "Life and Letters"—will recall the affectionate relations which obtained between the historian and his sisters, how deeply his brotherly feeling suffered when the sentiment he had so carefully cherished was assailed by an opposing interest. Even though Macaulay recognized that he was repining against the great fundamental laws of society, he still repined. He was accustomed to say "My sister's company is sufficient for me," when marriage was suggested to him, and probably no sisters ever had a more loyal brother. It was the boast of his sisters "Meg," and "Nancy" that he was never so lively and agreeable as in the parlour of their old London home in Great Ormond Street. Macaulay, in an unusual degree, cherished domestic happiness, and dreaded lest, when his sources were exhausted, he should have nothing left to fill the blank save ambition.

Instances of this class might be largely multiplied from every sphere of social life, showing that one of the strongest of human ties is that which exists among brothers and sisters. And, even where this is temporarily disturbed, reunion is usually once more pleasantly realised when brother and sister are thrown together. It may therefore be definitely asserted that to such happy association the world has been indebted for some of its highest achievements and noblest deeds.

## CONSISTENCY DEMANDED.

(Prairie Witness, Indian Head.)

Notices have been sent out to the postmasters of the Dominion that henceforth the *Witness* must be closed on Sundays. This is done in response to the solicitations of the Lord's Day Alliance which has rightly, we think, insisted that as far as possible, everybody shall have one day's rest in seven. The Alliance is gradually making its influence felt in every department of our national life. It might not be an axis, however, to note here that slightly more consistency should be called for on the part of prominent clergymen. It is not an uncommon thing to see one of the big preachers of our large cities either come into or go out of a town by train on a Sunday. Now, with one who is either a powerful member or ardent supporter of the Lord's Day Alliance movement, or is a clergyman of high rank in any church which takes a firm and aggressive attitude in the work of the Alliance, such travelling by Sunday trains is certainly not a work of necessity or mercy, it is emphatically not ear-marked with the highest consistency. If persisted in (and it seems to be growing more common) such actions are bound to hinder and to injure the work these churches have set themselves to accomplish. The apostles of a cause should at least strive to keep the ideal in sight they persist in keeping before others. To do anything else is to bring the Lord's Day Alliance movement into ridicule.