

A Sunday with Rev. John Thomas, Pastor of Myrtle St. Baptist Church, Liverpool, England.

The steamer by which we expected to return from Wales was advertised to sail from Liverpool Saturday, September 29, but on the day previous we were informed by telegram that the steamer would not sail until Tuesday, October 2. However, having all our arrangements made we decided to spend Saturday, Sunday and Monday in Liverpool. This gave us a little time to look around Liverpool and view its own magnitude and the magnitude of its many miles of docks; and it also gave us an opportunity to satisfy a long cherished desire we had had of hearing one of the most brilliant stars of the English pulpit of the present day, Rev. John Thomas, who has for some years occupied the pulpit of the late mighty preacher, Rev. Hugh Stowel Brown. Sunday morning, September 30, amid a typical English drizzle, we wended our way to the Myrtle St. Baptist church. We informed an usher at the door that we were strangers and wished to be shown into a seat from which we could hear well, and he very kindly took us into one that gave us a good view of the preacher as well. I shall not attempt a description of the church, only to say that it is one of the largest in Liverpool. The preacher was already in his pulpit. He seemed to us, as he sat there, waiting for the minute to commence his service, that he had one of the finest heads,—it was surely the longest we ever saw. We saw him once before, years ago, when he was only a student in his first year at Pontypool College and the writer in his last year at Llangollen College. Both institutions have now moved to Cardiff and Bangor respectively,—these places being university towns. Physically, Mr. Thomas seemed to us very diminutive, with a slight tendency to limping, but intellectually, and spiritually also, he is a giant. It may be said of Spurgeon and Hugh Stowel Brown that they were giants of those days, but John Thomas is one of the giants of these days. It is a noted fact that the three men that have made the greatest mark in the Liverpool pulpit these last fifty years have been men of Celtic origin. Hugh Stowel Brown was a Manxman, one sturdy branch of the old Celtic stock; Ian McLaren is a Scotchman, another no mean branch, and John Thomas, the Welshman, and in our humble opinion he is the greatest of the three. The preliminary part of the service that morning was of the usual kind in a Baptist church. When the time for the sermon arrived he gave out as his text Prov. 23:12: "Apply thine heart unto instruction and thine ears to the words of knowledge."

In his introductory remarks, Mr. Thomas arraigned very severely those who are inclined to blame the pulpit altogether for the non attendance of the masses at public worship. It was wrong to hold up the weakness of the pulpit as the sole cause of it. If the masses failed now in attendance more so than formerly, which he very much doubted, while he acknowledged that the pulpit was weak in some points, he must place the biggest part of blame on the pew. It was not merely weak preaching, but extremely bad hearing in the pew, and consequently a failure on the part of the pew to work out the preaching in the conduct. To make the pulpit strong and attractive to the masses, the pew must also be strong and attractive in hearing and living. The preacher, in dividing his text, said that the connection of the ear and heart was an exceedingly close one. The connection, in fact, was indissoluble. Whatever characterizes the one, characterizes the other. If the ear is sound, the heart is usually sound. If the ear is bad through inattention, the heart partakes of the same quality. If the ear is in training, the heart also is informed and instructed.

I. The Symptomatic Connection between the Heart and the Ear.—Whatever symptoms appear in the ear are also clear in the heart. All the diseases of the human body have their clear set of well-defined symptoms. These symptoms are well known to the skilled physician, and he treats them accordingly. There is, too, a diseased ear that affects the heart. That is a condition which every one should guard against.

1. There is the erratic ear. The physical condition of the ear is sometimes such that one imagines he hears things that are far from his range of hearing. This kind of condition is misleading and sometimes causes serious mistakes. And in listening to the word of truth there are ears that hear wrongly. The truth beats upon the ear-drums of such in sounds that are strange and foreign to the intention of the speaker. This is the curious ear, having an insatiable desire for variety. In fact it is the "itching ear," of which the apostle speaks.

2. The sensational ear. This is the ear that is ever on the lookout for something new. This is the kind of ear that the Athenians had. "For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing." All it wants is novelty. This ear would much rather have the mountebank in the pulpit playing his tricks upon the credulity of the audience than to have a faithful preacher telling the gospel story in its simple, unadorned beauty. An ear that becomes depraved in its hunger for novelty has an equally debasing influence upon the heart.

3. The limited ear. The limited ear lacks understanding of that which is heard. Its powers of comprehension are circumscribed. And the heart affected is to the same extent by its limitation.

II. The Moral Connection between the Heart and the Ear.—A diseased condition of the ear, if not corrected, will naturally aggravate the diseased condition of the heart. As an unhealthy atmosphere will increase the diseases of the body, so an unhealthy ear has a baneful effect upon the heart.

III. The Associated Discipline of the Heart and Ear.—Apply thine heart unto instruction and thine ears to the words of knowledge." "Instruction" in the text means discipline. The literal meaning would be: "Make thy heart go for correction and (make) thine ears (go) for the words of knowledge." The teaching for us is to compel the ear and the heart to go through the severest course of discipline.

Such in brief is an outline of the morning's sermon. The evening's sermon was practically an account of his recent visit to London, to the opening of Spurgeon's Tabernacle. Mr. Thomas was honored with the privilege of preaching the opening sermon in the New Tabernacle. In rehearsing his experiences to his people that evening, he announced as his subject, "The Great Gospel of a Great Man." He gave as his text, 2 Tim. 4:2: "Preach the Word." Spurgeon's character as a preacher, he said, was impossible of analysis. He would simply mention two of what seemed to him the most salient features of his preaching. They are these: 1. Naturalness; 2. Directness.

We came away from the Myrtle St. Chapel evening with the feeling strong upon us that we had spent there one of the most pleasant and profitable Sundays we spent in the old land. To our mind Mr. Thomas is the greatest preacher among the younger preachers of the English pulpit of the present day,—perhaps the smallest in body, but the mightiest in intellect, eloquence and grasp of spiritual things.

DAVID PRICE.

Yarmouth.

The Way of Salvation.

A large number of persons who read the MESSENGER AND VISITOR, in all probability, have never accepted Christ as their Saviour, and by a personal experience are wholly unacquainted with the blessings of a Christian life. I would like to address a few words to such readers on the vital theme of personal salvation, and in the burning words "which the Holy Spirit teacheth," show you how to be saved. The inspired answer of the Apostle Paul to the earnest question of the Philippian jailer has been the key note to nearly every gospel message delivered since; "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." What does believing on Christ mean? Is it a mere intellectual assent to the Bible record of this life, death and resurrection? "The devils believe this and even tremble." To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ means,

I. You must feel you need a Saviour. You have tried to do without one for "the time past of your life." You have tried resolutions, prayers, reformation, tears and promises. But somehow the resolutions were broken, you forgot the promises, and the tears were quickly dried up. You found yourself slipping back into the old way. The struggle was vain, sin was too strong for you. You found out two things in this struggle, first you were a sinner in God's sight, and second only God could save you from your sins. You need a Saviour. The guilt of sin is upon you, there is unrest in your heart. There is a "wrath to come" from which you need to be delivered, there is a life of holy fellowship with God which you are not fitted to live. How loth you have been to acknowledge this deepest need of your life. How long you have been learning the first letter in the gospel alphabet. The letter A. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God" Rom. 3:23. But you must learn this lesson before you can take up any other. You need a Saviour, one who can deal with the problems of sin, temptation, heredity, environment, holiness and destiny. One who is Almighty, and gracious, that is, one who is able to save and also willing to save.

II. You must believe that Jesus Christ is that Saviour. There is no other Saviour, "Neither is there salvation in any other" Acts 4:12. Moses and Daniel and Elijah were great leaders and prophets, but neither of them was a Saviour. Peter and John and Paul were chief among the apostles but they laid no claim to being Saviours. Plato, and Seneca and Phiny were philosophers but not Saviours.

Jesus Christ is alone "The Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world" John 1:29. No one else ever said "Come unto me and I will give you rest" Matt. 11:28. It was never written of another that "By Him all who believe are justified from all things" Acts 13:39. He is the God-appointed Saviour. "His name shall be called Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins" Matt. 1:21. God predetermined this name for him because the name stood for what he was to accomplish. He deliberately chose to be your Saviour "Who loved me and gave himself for me." He is the

only Saviour. "Beside me there is no Saviour." Then he is a sufficient Saviour. He kept God's law and "made it honorable" in this life as a man. He bore the curse of a broken law in his death, and made your reconciliation to God possible. He rose from the dead that you might have his life in you and that you might be "kept safe in his life." He sent from heaven his Holy Spirit to take his place by your side, to sanctify your life, and to be your instructor and guide in the new life. Yes, he is all you need. 1 Cor. 1:30 "He is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption."

III. You must receive this Saviour to be your own Saviour. "I wish I were a Christian," you have been saying for a long time. But there is a great difference between wishing to be one and choosing to be one. Desiring is not deciding, a wish is not a purpose. You see that it is right to be a Christian, you greatly desire to be a Christian, but until you choose Jesus Christ as your own Saviour you are not a Christian. You are willing to admit the truth of the Bible with reference to Jesus Christ, and yourself as a lost sinner, more than this you will even assent to the plan of salvation as recorded in the Holy Scriptures, but until you cast yourself unreservedly upon Jesus Christ and begin to really trust him for salvation, you are not saved.

Choosing Christ is first a resolve then an act. "I will arise," this is the resolve, "And he arose" is the act. Do not be deceived into thinking this "too simple," or "unlike the expressions you have heard related by Christians" in "revival meetings." It is God's way of salvation. John 1:12 "As many as received Him to them gave he power to become the children of God, even to those who believed on His name." May God bless and save as you remember these three points,

First, Know your need.

Second, Know that Jesus Christ is your only Saviour.

Third, Cast yourself upon Him at once for salvation.

W. S. M.

Practical French.

(FROM LETTER TO "HASSELLTINE HOUSE," NEWTON CENTER.)

My last letter was mailed at Marseilles, so I shall not go back of that port for my news. Some of us had such fun "seeing" Marseilles. All we saw was not much in one sense, but in another it was everything; for we went first of all to the church, *Notre Dame de la Garde* which is so high up that from it one can see the whole city, the harbor, islands, and all. Getting there and back again was the fun! Mr. and Mrs. Dowd, Miss Long and I started out to walk to the church. We could see it, but did not realize how far off it was, and when we got into the city we could not see the church for the houses. How and where such a high object could hide, still beats my comprehension; but it did, and then how I racked my brain for the scraps of French I used to know! All I could conjure up was the question, "Où est?" and so I said to one person after another as we gained a new corner in the right direction, "Où est la church (in good English) *Notre Dame*?" These persons poured out for our enlightenment, exhaustless streams of directions in what may have been good French, and whenever we understood one word, we looked intelligently grateful, said "Merci" with some fear that perhaps after all it did not mean "Thank you," and walked on.

Once, where several streets went down a hill from one point, our informant said among many other and to us useless words, "Descendez vous là!" whereupon I informed the rest of the company that it meant go down there! The exact street to go down we decided for ourselves, and after much wandering we came to a lovely place, the foot of a hill that was all a public garden. The hill we climbed with joy and were refreshed; but where was the church? It had proved a veritable will-o'-the-wisp. When we got to the top of the garden, there was our church, away up, and on, on! So on we went, and up—O such a climb! Rocky and pebbly, it was a typical pilgrimage. We remarked on the extreme devotion of those who climbed up to worship every day. But we got there at last, and then, though we had felt the need of French tongues and French ears to find the place, yet, once there, the universal sight was enough. Our eyes feasted on the glorious scene, and we forgot we were in a strange land. We could see and think all we wanted to in English. The sun was just setting, and the lights in the sky, on the harbor, and over the city were very lovely. The colors of the houses are very delicate, and all the roofs are pink or terra cotta, which, blended with the gray of the walls and the green of the trees and grass, gives a beautiful effect to the whole.

Returning, we walked again part way, inquiring as before, only this time Mr. Dowd used his store of *la belle Française*, while I rested from former labors. When we came to where the trams were we thought to take one, as we were now somewhat tired. It looked easy, but which one to choose was another matter. The names were, alas, slack, of no use to us. We determined to take a carriage instead. Then began the attempt to make the driver understand that we wanted to go on