

DEAR BRO. SHERMAN, -The following letter contains the substance of an address delivered by Bro. J. Rotherham, at the general meeting held at Wrexham, Eng., in the year 1851. C. A.

"My beloved Friend, -With much pleasure I embrace this opportunity of putting you a few lines with regard to a deeply interesting subject. I have ever been very sensitive to making any allusion to myself, when the advocacy of living truth has been the immediate object. Sometimes I confess, this delicacy has prevented my serving the interests I have had at heart so fully as I otherwise might have done. At the same time there are occasions, undoubtedly, when we cannot so well advocate great truths, as by narrating the manner in which our own minds were brought under their influence. This thought emboldens me to send you a brief account of my past religious history, and of my present position in relation to Primitive Christianity. You well know, that on more than one occasion I have so far changed my sentiments as to be obliged to change my position in the religious world. In my fifteenth year I became a member of the Conference Methodist denomination, to which my beloved parents belonged. Having been a local preacher in that body for two or three years, and greatly desiring to be fully employed in preaching the gospel, I entered the ministry of the Wesleyan Methodist association in 1850, in consequence of not being able, on examination, to approve of the despotic constitution of the parent body. After sustaining that position for nearly three years, I was induced, by circumstances which need not be related, to read the best treatise that I could obtain on either side of the celebrated controversy on Baptism. This led me to be immersed without delay, and to become connected with the Baptist denomination. Having been a Baptist for about one year and a quarter, I have recently connected myself with the "Disciples of Jesus Christ," constituting the "Christian Churches" of this country. Probably this brief outline of my course may excite in your mind the fear that I am "unstable," "given to change, &c." I acknowledge that I have often suffered acutely from the consciousness that I was laying myself open to this suspicion, yet what could be done? Truth and duty were inflexible. To stifle and betray deep convictions, appeared to me far more to be deprecated than any accusations that superficial and prejudiced minds might raise against me. A Christian brother once said to me, when we had been conversing on this very point, "My brother, we must change till we are right." The moral daring of this sentiment started me, but I never forgot it, and subsequent reflection has convinced me of its soundness and excellency. Besides, I have often been encouraged by discovering that each of my changes had been a step in the right direction - an advance - and not the mere instability of a mind given to change. The latter character may be compared to a door on its hinges everlastingly swinging backwards and forwards; the former to the guest who advances from the "portico" to the "sanctum," and from thence to the "sanctum sanctorum" of an illustrious patriot's abode. The fact is, our responsibility changes with our knowledge and opportunities, and woe to those who yield no more return when much is given, than they did when little was given. You may desire to know a few of the details of the manner in which I have been led to con-

nect my present views of the Christian religion. I will try and gratify you. When stationed at St. John on Tees as a preacher in the Wesleyan Methodist Association, I labored every alternate Lord's day at Hartlepool. One Saturday evening on my arrival at the latter place, I called on a friend, a bookseller, to ask after the welfare of himself and family. He being engaged with customers, I turned to his counters to amuse myself with his publications. While thus occupied, I took up a couple of volumes labelled "The Millennial Harbinger." It was a singular title. What could it mean? I glanced at the contents, and read a few minor articles. There was something about them so racy, so spirited, and withal so singular, that I borrowed the magazines, and sat up by my half-penny candle during the three nights of my stay, devouring their contents. I well recollect a series of articles on "The Bath of Regeneration," by A. Campbell; a discourse on "Justification by Faith," but not faith alone, and other things. But what most struck me was, that the books advocated "Immersion for the remission of sins." Astonishing! I had never heard of such a thing before. This was so strange a doctrine, so entirely subversive of the faith alone system, that I could not receive it, yet I felt surprised to find what Scripture could be adduced, which appeared to favor it, and especially how plausibly my objections were answered. But to condense. The "Harbinger" did not then convince me of the truth on this subject. It drew the sword of the spirit from the scabbard of opinionism and prejudice in which it had hitherto been encased; and when, being comfortably settled as a Baptist at Wem, I at length came into closer contact with it, it penetrated my mind like a sharp two-edged sword. A little while before this painful process commenced in good earnest, I well remembered being afraid of the Mormons. There was one point, which I dare not debate with them - it was "baptism" for the remission of sins. At length this subject was fairly forced upon my attention, simply by reading the New Testament. There was Peter, in his reply to the Pentecostian enquirers. Could his language be mistaken? Did he not mean what he said? And then, compare the passage speaking or implying the same thing. "True, faith as opposed to works - the works of the law - in our justification, was in the book. But was "faith alone" there, either in opposition to repentance or baptism? The light increased. What was I to do? To go on resisting this doctrine, would now be stifling conviction - fighting against God. That would be miserable work, and ruinous. On the other hand, if I embraced "baptism for the remission of sins," I must preach it; and would the Baptist endure that? As for the Disciples of Christ in this country, I did not know where to find them, much less did I know that they had a "regular ministry." Indeed I was pretty certain they had not. Then if the Baptists rejected me for my "heresy," what was I to do? I could work, if not exactly dig, and to do that I was by no means ashamed. There was everything honorable in it. But then, could I be happy behind the counter? Were not all my sympathies, my predilections, my ardent aspirations, enlisted on the side of entire devotedness to the work of publishing the sinner's friend? It was a hard struggle. At this crisis I opened my mind to a beloved Christian brother, who had been immersed from the Primitive

Methodists. What did he think of such and such passages? To my astonishment, his views very nearly approximated to those which were forcing themselves upon my mind. The conclusion was, come to, that they must be correct. The circumstances just related was like help from Heaven. The point was decided. I neither could nor would hold out any longer. My mind was made up. Let the consequences be what they might, that made no difference. I would sooner break stones on the road than conceal my sentiments, or betray them. Blessed be God for bringing me through such an ordeal. Now I know that it was neither ambition, nor love of change, nor covetousness, that actuated me. Gratitude fills my heart that at such a cost I have obtained an assurance of sincerity, candor, and carefulness in seeking after truth, which is to me beyond all price, but which could never have been secured by any other means. You will be gratified to learn, that the fears which have been both so painful and profitable, are not likely to be realized, but that there is every prospect of my life still being devoted to the work which I love. I can easily imagine that you are ready to ask, "and pray how do you like your change?" To this I will briefly reply, and then conclude. My recent change has, so far, afforded me much delight. Apart from the additions made directly to my happiness by an unreserved obedience to the truth, it has given great pleasure to perceive in many of my new Christian friends an intelligence in the Scriptures, a nobility of character, a self-denying zeal and courage in the spread of divine truth, and moreover, a strength of brotherly love, with which, with a few noble exceptions, I had not before been acquainted. The annual co-operative meeting that has just been held, has afforded me a rich satisfaction. I have been present at two annual assemblies of the Wesleyan Methodist association, and at one annual association of the General Baptist, but I never before witnessed anything like this such humility in the leading brethren, and such an active brotherly affection in all, combined with an intense longing to do everything that could be done to bring all men to a knowledge of Christ, I have never seen equalled. I may be panguine in what I thus say, but I am certain of being conscientious. This testimony, if it is of any worth, is the more heartily given, on account of the unkind, unfounded, and unjust insinuations which are everywhere thrown out against those who are content to call themselves Christians by those who are themselves very sensitive about being unchristianized. With longing desires for the universal diffusion of Christian truth and love, and for your own entire liberation from sectarian bondage, and human traditions, I remain your affectionate friend,
J. B. ROTHERHAM.

Attend carefully to details of your business.
Be prompt in all things.
Endure trials patiently.
Fight life's battles bravely, manfully.
Hold integrity sacred.
Injure not another's reputation or business.
Join hands only with the virtuous.
Keep your mind from evil thoughts.
Lie not for any consideration.
Make few acquaintances.
Never try to appear what you are not.
Observe good manners.
Pay your debts promptly.
Question not the veracity of a friend.

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