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H. B. SHERMAN, EDITOR.

"WORK WHILE IT IS CALLED TO-DAY."

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REMINISCENCES No. 5

—OR—

HISTORY OF THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF OUR CAUSE IN CANADA.

—BY—

JOSEPH ASH

In 1843 or '44 a few brethren were gathered in what was then called Capt. Trull's school house, south of Bowmanville. Capt. Trull and wife, Ira Burk and wife, Widow Burk, Erastus Burk, and some others whose names I cannot now call to mind were charter members. Some of these came from the Baptists and some from the Christian Connexion. John McGill and myself attended meetings with them often, for two or three years, had quite a few additions to our little church. Elder David Burk and wife, from the Baptists, in 1845 or '46 were among the number. During this time we held several meetings in Bowmanville, in a private school-room. I cannot detail the years of labor I gave the infant cause there, until it became a large, intelligent and wealthy congregation. John McGill did good service in the infant days of the cause, and I think M. B. Stone and perhaps Dr. McGill and A. Farewell lent a helping hand.

One or two pleasing incidents I must relate before I pass on. By this time we had several members in the village. It became known that John Simpson, a wealthy, active and intelligent miller and merchant, was much exercised over his spiritual state. He was not a member of any church, but an attendant, and a very liberal supporter of a congregational church. We in Oshawa had just concluded a big meeting, at which the late excellent Bro. T. C. Scott was one of our preachers. As Bro. Scott was quite a favorite of Simpson's we were induced to go to Bowmanville that Bro. Scott might have some conversation with Simpson, on the subject of religion. We (I think 4 of us) called at Simpson's store, and found him in his office. Scott and him were in the office alone for a short time, but soon the "Minister," Mr. Clinic, came, and went into the office, he having got some hint of what was going on. Indeed it became known all about the store in a short time, and quite a few had gathered. The "minister" came out and walked the floor in quite an excited state and went back into the office, and tried all he could to induce Simpson not to be baptised, thus interrupting them, and repeated the interruption several times. Some 12 or 15 of us spectators were in feverish anxiety about the result. At length the door of the office opened, and our hearts beat high with joy and exultation at the announcement made by Scott, "I am happy to tell you (addressing us from Oshawa) that Mr. Simpson is to be baptised immediately, and we are going to the lake past Elder Burk's, and you, Bro. Ash, are to go at once, call on Elder Burk, notify them and find the best place for the baptism." O, the excitement there was in that village.

Men were on the run along the nearly every street giving notice of

the coming event, and almost every available rig was out instant. I well remember how excited Garner Gifford was, he ran about wildly, saying to every one he saw "Come, we must go." I know the best place for baptising for I had baptised quite a few there, so I lingered to see the wild excitement of the people.

I would like such delightful seasons now. To our great astonishment, and who could believe it; Mr. Clinic, the minister, who had so bitterly opposed Bro Scott, and Simpson's immersion, was one of the first on the ground with his carriage to go to the Lake. I then drove with, I think, John McGill in my buggy. When we got on a rise in the road and could see a long way behind, it was wonderful and delightful to see the long train of carriages coming like a funeral procession. Indeed it was going to a burying. We called at Elder Burk's, made the news known to their great joy, and there we had three more recruits, for the master's service. The late excellent Jacob Shurtliff, the late highly esteemed W. R. Burk and Sarah Burk, now the wife of Senator John Simpson. W. R. and Sarah Burk were son and daughter of the late excellent Elder David Burk. A delay was necessary and when all were ready the long train moved on. It was a delightful day in, I think, June; the lake was calm and everything but one was pleasant and joyous. It seemed almost incredible but it is a fact that the "minister" was so determined to keep Mr. Simpson as a patron, that he did his utmost to persuade Mr. Simpson to abandon his baptism. He (Simpson) was not of that kind of metal, to vasillate at the command of an interested preacher or any other body else. Making no impression on Simpson he commenced an argument against immersion with Elder Burk, who soon resigned the argument to Bro. Scott, which kept up till all were ready, when Bro Scott bowed Mr. Clinic away and led Mr. Simpson into the water, and buried him with his Lord, and raised him up to walk in a new life. Rom. 6-4, Col. 2-12. And then in like manner the other three making four in all. Our singing was grand, prayer excellent, and a fine little speech by Bro. Scott made the occasion one of the most soul cheering and exhilarating of my christian experience. I fancy the angels were looking on with delight to see those sinners obey the Lord. I have nothing to say or imagine about what the angels thought of the "minister." I know what I and many others thought.

Another incident small then but like Jonah's gourd grew larger. At our meetings in the village, held in a private school room some time before the foregoing, it was said by the preacher that "he could not see, if the gospel was preached now as it was on the day of pentecost (Acts 2-37), why it would not produce the same effect on mankind as it did then; humanity was the same and wanted the same saviour and the same remedy for sin. A small black-haired, black-eyed stranger, to the preacher sat on a back seat, very attentive all the way through. After the meeting was over, the preacher

enquired who that black haired black-eyed man was. O, said they, "that is our school master, his name is Charles Lister." I shall have a good deal to say about that black-eyed man hereafter, and for the present say that those remarks about the power of the gospel fell on good ground, and was the seed that matured and finally brought him away from Minister Clinic's church to the church of Christ.

It was not very long after Bro. Simpson, and a number of others united before it was deemed necessary to remove the congregation into the village. A suitable building was prepared and all went there and worshipped for several years when they sold the old house and built the present house. For several years I had about as much care and bestowed about as much labour there as in Oshawa. Elder Burk, helped the church much, and considerable ability was developed among the members. The church was prosperous in religious culture, and a large number were baptised. During these years very valuable aid was given this church as well as Oshawa, by Bro. Scott, Black, Anderson, Oliphant, Kilgour, Miggins, Jas. Beatty et al., A. R. Green, of Ohio, and Dr. McGill and Jno. McGill, M. B. Stone of Oshawa, and Sheppard.

I cannot consent to let the little black eyed man go yet and I must speak of his conversion now and a good deal more by and by. He became much interested in hearing and studying the Bible more so than ever before. The way we presented the gospel was entirely new to him, but he could not at once give up his sprinkling for baptism nor his calvinism. In his studies he took the right course he wanted to be sure we were right before he could change his position. Lords day after Lords day he came to the meeting and when the meeting was over go into Bro. Simpson's house and put a lot of questions to him or someone who could answer them. With great anxiety I watched him. He was not one of those captious insincere ones who would put puzzling questions for the fun of it, he was honest and in good earnest to know the Lords will. After this had gone on a long time and I had answered a great many of his questions, I do so well remember after the Lords day services, I went in to Bro. Simpson's house and presently Lister came in, Bible in hand with leaves turned down and said Mr. Simpson I have a lot more questions for some of you to answer if you can. Very well said he, Bro. Ash can do it. His questions were mostly in Romans and Galatians on calvinism and a few on baptism. I answered them briefly but pointedly. He stood in the middle of the room his fingers in his Bible for some moments motionless at last he heard a deep sigh closed his book and unceremoniously walked out. I was anxious to know his secret thoughts. I return home and before I went there again I heard of his baptism. All this time none of us for a moment supposed he would ever become a preacher so faithful so justly famed as he has been for so many years. He at once took a lively interest in the prayer meetings, the Bible class and the Sunday School. 77 - late

Bro. James Chase, Dr. McGill, A. Farewell, Jno. McGill and myself had a long talk about Bro. Lister, and we concluded he had a call to preach. "There now" says one "I thought you folks did not believe in a call to preach." Hold, attend you are a little too fast, we are the very people who do believe in a call to preach. "There is a general call, a special call or no call at all." What you have in mind is a special call such as all the sects believe in. They believe the Lord picks out one here and there to preach and then sends the Holy Spirit directly from heaven, into their hearts, to convict of sins, convert and to qualify to preach, and thus too is that one thus converted, and qualified to preach if he does not preach. And to such they think the Lord will be, "mouth, matter, mind and wisdom." All they have to do is to "open the mouth, and the Lord will fill it." They are to "speak as the spirit gives them utterance," or, "as their minds may be led." Now, friend, you can see the impropriety of such a call. Under it, all the sectarian dogmas of the world are preached. One contradicting the other, all along the line, and every one claims he is "preaching the gospel. This call, and its fruits, only has to be looked at to see its nakedness. The "general call takes all in, and he, who has a desire to preach, and has the qualification, natural and acquired, is called, and called of God. Moreover, the general call includes the fire side and the road-side talkers. All must occupy, and improve the talent they have continually. This is the call we concluded Bro. Lister had, "a desire and ability." To say that there is no call is only saying that God has given the gospel to man and retired from the scene of action and leaves man to do as they please without any divine aid and that He will by and by judge him for how he has done and acted through life. We spoke of it to him often, but, dilatorily overcame his desire for some months. At last I succeeded in getting his consent to come to Oshawa and preach on the Lords day in morning. He came & spoke, short but remarkably well. That was the first time the little black eyed man went from Bowmanville, to preach. He became more active, and preached at our meeting places through the country even as far west as Pickering, and where I leave him for the present.

The churches of Oshawa and Bowmanville prospered, and we secured the preaching services of some of the best preachers in Ohio, in addition to our own home talent which was by no means small. The members male and female were very active in those days, in spreading the truth, church discipline was stringent, no outside issues to cause division, or alienation; no desire for corrupting the Lords day worship by machinery. I am glad to know however much some slip shod professors may desire the introduction of the machinery of Satan, we still remain almost entirely free from it in Canada. O, I do long for a return of those happy days, zeal, energy, love, and union, that permeated nearly every member male and female. But I fear I shall long in vain. I now look down about Oshawa, Bowmanville and Pickering, where I spent so much of my life (over 30 years) and see so few of the old stalwart brethren now in the land of the living, that I feel sad and lonely. Still there is a grand redeeming feature in it all, for, so many have come to the knowledge of the truth within the boundaries of those churches, many of whom have gone to their home in heaven, and many waiting to join them, and then those young men, who are still living

and proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ, who have arisen among us and were encouraged in their work of training many to righteousness, often receive us in our loneliness. I hope to see "them shining as stars in the firmament forever and ever." In naming them, 1st G. J. Lister, 2nd T. Lytle, now of Ky., 3rd E. D. Barclay, now prof. of Languages in Abingdon College Ill., 4th Wm. Porter of Pickering, 5th Geo. Barclay, now of Toronto. The brethren of Oshawa, Bowmanville, and Pickering, have great reason to thank God for sending so many able, and efficient laborers from among them into his harvest field. The present leading efficient men in the church of Bowmanville, are Geo. McGill, Richard Windat, and W. A. Newk.

BAPTISM OF JOHN.

DEAR BROTHER SHERMAN:—J. D's query No. 3, in the March number of the Christian Worker on Acts 16: 3, 4, 5, has given some good christian brethren, especially our Baptist friends, a good deal of trouble. They, to establish their claim that they are the direct descendants of John the Baptist, strenuously contend that the twelve Disciples whom Paul found at Ephesus, were not baptised after they heard Paul preach. The reason is obvious, should they admit this, it would break the connection in what they call their "apostolic succession." In this, I think they are alarmed without cause. The whole trouble comes, I think, from a misunderstanding of the question.

The Scriptures nowhere say these twelve were John's disciples. They were "baptized unto John's baptism," not by John. We have no record that John ever preached at Ephesus. Yes, but says one, might not some of his disciples cross over the Mediterranean Sea and be found there by Paul? I answer yes, it is possible, but not very probable. They were, no doubt baptised (immersed) the same as John immersed, but not by John. Who then baptised them? In Act. 18 and 24, we had a certain Jew named Apollus, born at Alexandria, learned man, and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. What Scriptures was he "mighty" in? It could not be in the new Testament, for it was not written at that time. Then it must have been the old that he was versed in.

Now this man Apollus, so doubt had read the Prophets Isaiah and Joel, who had prophesied of the "coming of the just one and the glory that should follow," he taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of the works and doings of John. Now let us read between the lines a little. He had learned that over in Judea a great personage had made his appearance, and they called him John. He had heard that all the region round about Jordan had come to him "and were baptised by him in Jordan confessing their sins," and knowing that "according to the Scriptures," that the one called Christ was to soon make his appearance, he reasoned with himself, "is not this the Christ?" He concluded he was; and learning that he baptised the people in the water, proceeded at once to preach to the people and do likewise. It is fair to presume that he preached and baptised "unto John's baptism," the twelve disciples whom Paul afterwards found, and in all probability taught them that John was the Christ.

This is a fair presumption, for the reason that many in Judea thought that John was the Christ, and he had to repeatedly correct them in this respect saying "I am not the Christ," etc.

Whether Apollus made and baptised these twelve disciples or

not—which can only be inferred from the fact that he was the first of whom we have any record of ever having preached in Ephesus. One thing is certain, he was in error in his understanding of the true gospel, when, when Aquilla and Priscilla heard, they took him unto them and expounded unto him the way of the Lord (Old Testament) more perfectly, showing by those books that John was not the Christ but only his messenger to prepare the way before him." After this new lesson in theology, Apollus was disposed to go into Achaia, where "he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, that Jesus was the Christ." Now we come to the point; we next find Apollus at Corinth, and Paul at Ephesus, where Apollus had been preaching before he had been "taught the way to the Lord more perfectly—Paul finds here certain disciples—Paul finds here persons who had been taught a certain kind of doctrine. By whom taught we have no certain knowledge, nor of the kind of teachings, but of one thing we are certain—they were taught in error, because they "had not heard whether there was any holy spirit," and consequently could not have heard John, for he taught this doctrine plainly—now who taught them? We say Apollus. What did he teach them? We believe he taught them that John was the Christ, and in all probability baptised the twelve disciples "unto John's baptism, not in the name of John. Paul did not ask these disciples who baptised them. He asked the question, "have you received the Holy Spirit since you believed?" they answered, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit." Says Paul "unto what then were you baptised?" They said unto John's baptism." Paul then explains to them John's mission and the meaning of his baptism and that John never taught a thing they had never heard before—that men should believe on Him that should come after him, that is, on Christ.

"Now when they heard this, that is the error which they had been taught, and which they had fallen into, through the erroneous teachings of some one, be he whom it may, "they were baptised into the name of the Lord Jesus. It will be remembered by the reader that this event took place long after the resurrection. We have no record of anyone being baptised into the name of the Father, Son & Holy Spirit until after Christ had risen from the dead. The commission was not given to perform the ordinance in three names, until about the time that Christ was to ascend up on high. The commission was duly carried out by the apostles, on and after the day of Pentecost.

The question does not turn, as to whether John's baptism was in form, the same as that practised by the Apostles, but as to whether these twelve men were re-baptised, because of the error in the teachings they had received. We claim they were re-baptised after hearing Paul. We believe they had been baptised possibly by Apollus, unto John, or in the name of John, believing that he was "the Christ," but when they heard from Paul that Jesus was the Christ, "they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus." In taking this position we know we are in conflict with all eminent Baptist authors, or at least with many of them. I think many of them see the error they have fallen into in denying the re-baptism of these twelve disciples at Ephesus, but having held so long that they were not re-baptised, and having taken this position in most of their standard works, it is hard to give it up. Now I will stop right here and give some one else a chance at the question.

E. EVANS.

Tonawanti, Mar. 1883

⊕ "mingus" was ordinary pronunciation of the death name *Mingus* (John James (son) of Orwood