

possessed an insatiable thirst for learning. Notwithstanding a tolerably good supply of useful literature with which his home was always stocked, he read, in addition, nearly all the books that he could borrow from the neighbours for miles around. Possessing also a remarkably retentive memory, when but a mere boy he had acquired a more accurate knowledge of Scripture history, and had read and digested more books—many of them requiring close study and attentive thought—than the majority of young men with much better opportunities for mental improvement.

Nothing of special importance occurred during the first thirteen years succeeding his father's settlement in the land of his adoption. His time was quietly spent amid the romantic scenery of his rural home, in what was then the backwoods of Canada. In the year 1847 he resolved to avail himself of greater educational advantages, and to qualify himself for a broader sphere of usefulness. In order to effect this object, he started one wintry November morning from his secluded forest home to become a student at the Normal School in Toronto, which had been opened a few months previously for public instruction. With characteristic energy and determination he travelled the whole of the distance, one hundred and twenty miles, on foot. After prosecuting his studies here with remarkable success, he returned home at the end of the academic year, taught school for about twelve or fourteen months, and came back again to attend lectures for another session. His ability and assiduity as a student soon rendered his proficiency so marked in all his studies, that he was frequently employed by the professors to assist them in teaching their classes. Before quitting the institution that session, he engaged as teacher of the school at Dunnville, Ont., where he taught for two years.

In 1851 he was called to the work of the Christian ministry in connection with the W. M. Church, of which he had been a member since 1843, when, together with his parents—who had previously been adherents of the Anglican Church—he was converted, under the instrumentality of the late Rev. John Williams, the Superintendent of the Asphodel Mission. He commenced his ministerial labours on the St. Thomas Circuit, some months after the meeting of the Conference, as junior preacher, under the direction of the Chairman of the London District. After re-