

SAMUEL TAPSCOTT.

The indebtedness of the present to the past will probably never be sufficiently recognised. We who enjoy the privileges of present-day civilization, are apt to render insufficient homage to the men and women who struggled with the difficulties of pioneer work, and laid those foundations of our commercial, educational, and religious life, without which the more imposing developments of the present would have been impossible. In Canada we are still so little removed from the pioneer period of our history, and Canadian Baptists especially, are still doing so much work of a pioneer character, that there is the less excuse for forgetfulness on our part, of those who bore the burden and heat of the earlier stages of our progress. And in the very front rank of those whom we may well cherish long in grateful remembrance, stands the heroic figure who is the subject of this memoir.

Samuel Tapscott was born in the parish of Culmstock, in the English County of Devonshire, on the 27th of December, 1804; and died at Brampton, Ontario, on the 4th of October, 1888. Of these 84 years, more than sixty were devoted, with unwavering fidelity, to the one great work, of making known the name of Christ to perishing men. Of the difficulties which he encountered and overcame, and of the work which he accomplished, we shall endeavor, in this article, to give some little account.

In childhood and youth Mr. Tapscott enjoyed none of those advantages of elementary education which are the common heritage of the children of rich and poor alike in our more favored day. He never went to Primary School even for a single day; and the proficiency which he subsequently attained was due, partly to the instruction received from his parents, but chiefly to his own intense thirst for learning, which led him in after years to apply himself to study with a diligence that would put many a student of our day to shame, and in spite of obstacles that would have discouraged any man of less determined character. Day after day he followed the plough, with an English or Greek Grammar in his pocket, utilizing every spare moment, to add to his store of knowledge.