

Almost immediately after his conversion young Aaron felt a call to preach. And here we discover the first indication of that self-reliance and independence of thought that marked his whole life. It is needless to tell any one familiar with early Canadian Baptist history, that ministerial education was not so highly thought of then as now. In fact there was a strong prejudice against an educated ministry; "man-made ministers" as they were called by some. And we must not judge too severely this feeling. There were many noble men who had been eminently successful in preaching the gospel in these parts, who never had any college training. These men were greatly beloved, and held in high honor; and it required no little strength of mind and will to run counter to this prejudice. But Mr. Slaght at once determined to seek a preparation for his life work by taking a theological course.

The only college the Baptists then had in Canada was at Montreal. Dr. Davis and Dr. Cramp were the instructors. The late Dr. Fyfe was also for a short time a teacher there. In this college Bro. Slaght remained three years. After his graduation he preached for a time in the city of Quebec; but under what circumstances, or with what results, I am unable to say. It was at any rate but a temporary service; and he soon returned to his home here, to enter, with all the energy and enthusiasm of his young manhood, on the great work he was destined to accomplish.

Soon after his return, in the year 1846, he gathered together a little band of eight brethren and sisters, one of whom was his brother, and all of whom were his neighbors, and formed them into a Baptist church. This, like most of the neighboring churches, was Free-will. He was the last of that little company to pass over the River. Soon after this Mr. Slaght was ordained to the work of the gospel ministry. The council was a large one; and among those who took part in the exercises of that now distant day were Rev. J. VanLoon, and Rev. W. H. Haviland, who are still with us. At this time much of the County of Norfolk was a wilderness; and Mr. Slaght soon after his ordination, was called upon to bury the first actual settler in the Township of Townsend.

The little church planted thus in the woods was blessed