Mr. Adams was born at Norwich, Ct., December 28, 1788. He graduated at Union College, July, 1816, but had not been a regular student there, having—probably in July, 1814—entered the class of 1815, as a protege of Dr. Nott, as is supposed. Upon the recommendation of the Faculty, the Board conferred the title of A. B. upon him in July, 1816. His scholarship was of so high an order that he was immediately engaged as a tutor in the College, and retained that position about two years. He undoubtedly studied theology during this time with Dr. Nott.

In the summer of 1817—as is supposed—he was licensed to preach by Union Association, and late in October or early in November he was hired by this Church, and the Church at Oxford, and for six months he alternated between the two villages. He came into this section as a missionary, probably in the employ of the Missionary Society of Connecticut, and as such preached in Norwich his first sermon after his licensure. He was the first regularly hired minister that this Church had. Thursday, November 15, 1817, he preached a Thanksgiving sermon in the Court House in this village; and in March, 1818, two sermons of his were printed, and sold in this vicinity. When he left here is not known.

March 11, 1819, he married Sarah Cooley Farnsworth, and April 21 was ordained and installed over the Presbyterian Church at Ludowville, N. Y. by Cayuga—now Ithaca—Presbytery. He remained there until June 19, 1827, when he went to Milan, Erie County, Ohio; was taken sick and went to Painesville, Lake County, Ohio, where he stayed seven years, leaving about 1835. He then went to Hammondsport, N. Y.; then to Athens, Pa; then to Horseheads, N. Y.; in all about four years. At the latter place some of his flock got the "western fever," and in 1837 urged him to go with them to Pecatonica—now Rockton, Ill., then a mere Indian trading post. Up to this time he had saved nothing. The colonists promised him a farm, and with the prospect of having something to leave to his children, he went, and organized a Church there. He also organized a Church at Beloit, Rock County, Wis., which is only a few miles from Rockton. Not long after, he very much offended some of his little flock by preaching against their daily habit of grog drinking, and they refused him any support. They also declined to fulfill their promise about the farm, and he was forced in 1840 to start out in search of employment. While wandering about, he contracted fever, which came near being fatal. In 1841 he was hired by a Church at Mineral Point, Iowa County, in the then territory of Wisconsin; his family, however, remained in Rockton. After about a year of faithful work with that Church, on March 8, 1842, he was prostrated by sickness, and died March 12, aged 53 years, 2 months and 14 days. He is described as "more than usual among his profession a scholarly man." He was very earnest, and at all times was eagerly reaching out after new views of truth in all directions. As a preacher he must have been very effective and convincing, for his nine years at Ludowville was an almost continuous revival; and there, as well as at Mineral Point, he was very dearly beloved by his people. (H., pp. 296 and 405. F., p. 418. Letters of Dr. E. F. Hatfield and Rev. Wm. W. Adams.)
Rev. WILLIAM M. ADAMS, A.M. Tut. U C., 1816, of Canterbury, Conn., was a member of the Adelphic Society. (Died: 1842)
Adelphic Catalogue 1830