

**THE SUNDAY  
SCHOOL UNION: ITS  
HISTORY AND WORK**

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The Sunday School Union: its history and work by William Henry Watson

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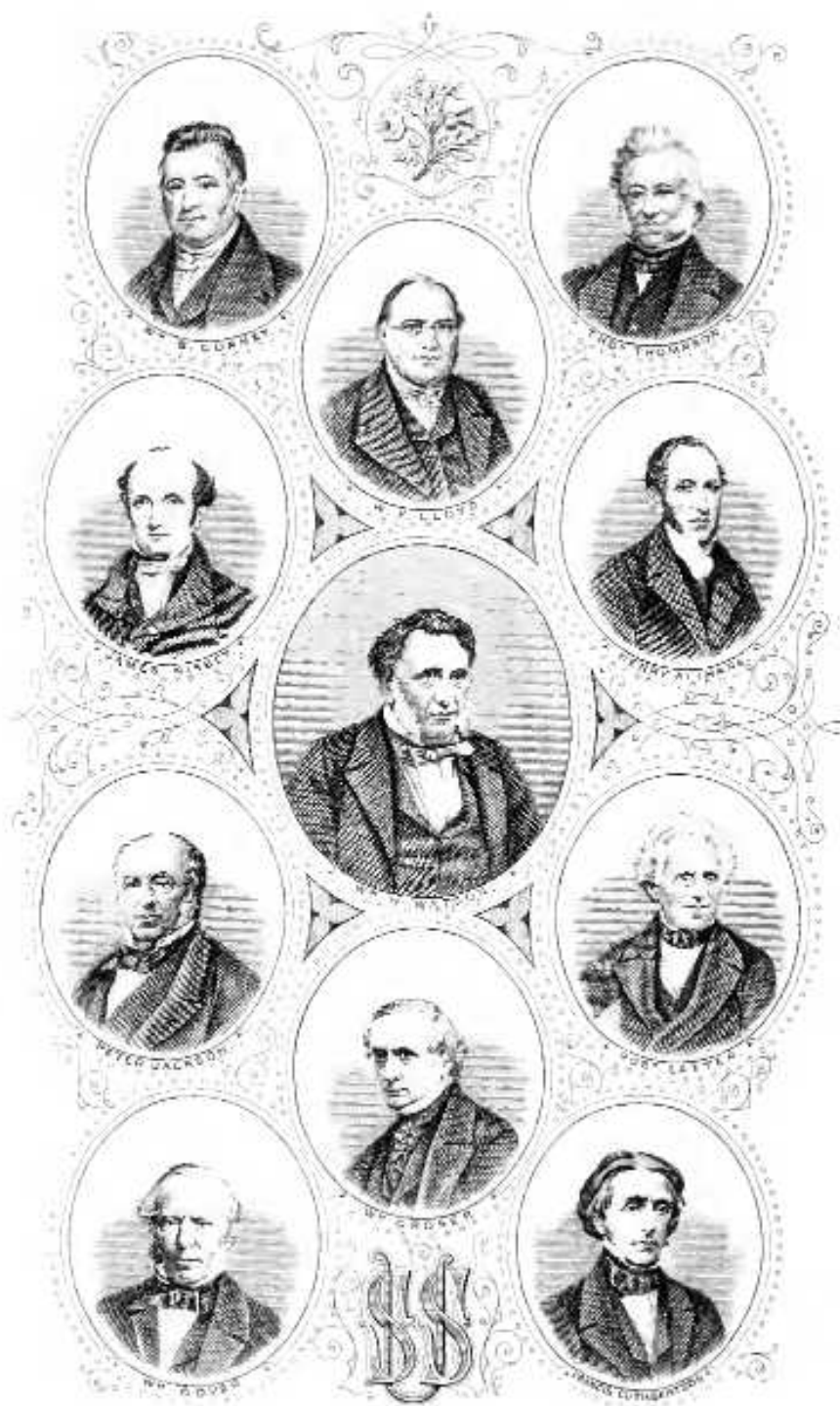
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**WILLIAM HENRY WATSON**

**THE SUNDAY  
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SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION:

ITS HISTORY AND WORK.

BY  
WILLIAM HENRY WATSON,

LATE SENIOR SECRETARY OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

With a Memorial Sketch of the Author,

BY W. H. GROSER, B.S., F.G.S.

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## P R E F A C E.

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THOSE readers of the present volume who may take the trouble to compare it with the Author's former work, will find a difference in the following particulars :—

The circumstances connected with the rise and progress of the Sunday school system have generally been omitted, having found a more appropriate place in "THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL," a volume already published by the Union.

Instead of the narrative being carried through in a chronological series, the various operations of the Union have been grouped together in distinct chapters, so that the description of each department of work is rendered perfect in itself.

The History was intended to close with the Jubilee of the Sunday School Union, and its immediate results, but it has been found impossible to refrain from bringing in some subsequent facts, the record of



which, it is trusted, will add to the interest and value of the volume.

The writer indulges the hope that this and the preceding work, to which reference has been made, will gratify and instruct all who are concerned for the religious instruction of the young on the Lord's day. They have been compiled under an impression that this great work would be promoted by the principal facts connected with its rise and progress being thus gathered together, while it could be done with little difficulty.

The attempt is prayerfully commended to the blessing of that Holy Spirit, whom the Saviour has promised shall guide His disciples into all truth.

*August, 1868.*

## MEMORIAL SKETCH

OF

### THE AUTHOR,

By WILLIAM H. GROSER, B.Sc., &c.

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CHRISTIAN earnestness is a grace which presents itself under different aspects in different individuals. In one man it takes the form of outbursts of emotion; his whole soul is on fire, and his tongue utters burning words; but his energy soon expends itself and is followed by a period of comparative inaction. His neighbour is, perhaps, of a completely opposite type. He is never roused into enthusiasm; compared with the other he seems impassive and spiritless, almost unfeeling; yet he is never inactive, never indolent.

These are extreme forms of earnestness. As in nature so in grace—there are the *convulsive* and the *continuous* modes of action; and between the extremes lie many gradations, which it would be foreign to our purpose to trace. What all Christians are concerned with is, to know and to aim at that type of earnestness which is the most Christ-like, and therefore the most commendable and influential. Doubtless it occupies an intermediate place. If our earnestness be spasmodic it may lead us into extravagance and imprudence, which in the quieter movements which succeed we shall bitterly regret and severely condemn; while the influence of our seasons of energetic action will be neutralized by the uncertainty of their recurrence. On the other hand, we may be too impassive, chilling more ardent co-workers

by our seeming coldness, and repelling those whom a more demonstrative bearing would have gathered to our side.

Of those with whom the writer has been privileged to associate few have seemed to him more nearly to approach the true type of earnest devotedness than he whose character and career it is now a mournful pleasure to recall. The earnestness of William Henry Watson was a quality which neither effervesced into mere excitement, nor degenerated into inaction; it never exploded, nor did it ever collapse. It was tested during half-a-century, and under that test it never changed. Mr. Watson's own estimate was somewhat different. A few hours before he died he remarked to his friend and pastor, the Rev. W. Howieson, "In looking back on my past life I regret that my religion has been one of principle almost exclusively, and that there has been in it so little of emotion." The sentiment was characteristic of the man, and betokened an accurate acquaintance with his own mental tendencies. Yet those who were privileged to know him, however slightly, could assuredly declare that the evidences of deep and genuine earnestness of spirit in all that he did were too obvious and too ample to need other enforcement.

The sight of a noble river often awakens a desire to trace it to its source; and when our admiration is excited by a work of art, or literary composition, curiosity is stimulated to learn something of its author. The birth and development of high moral and spiritual character, form, in like manner, a theme of interesting inquiry to the religious educator. We see and admire the result, and we naturally wish to know what causes combined to produce it, and to what past circumstances present facts are due.

In the case of our late friend and coadjutor, enough is ascertainable from the scanty records of his earlier life to show that, in his case, parental training combined with peculiarly favourable church privileges to educate, in the highest sense of the word, both intellect and heart. The home circle became a large one, William Henry being the eldest of twelve children, of whom but two have survived him. The date of his birth was June 15th, 1798, so that he was spared to enter on his seventy-first year.