

**BIOGRAPHY OF
REV. W.
H. GRISWOLD**

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Biography of Rev. W. H. Griswold by H. B. Soule

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UTICA:
A. WALKER, 30 GENESEE STREET.
1845.

PREFACE.

THE following Biographical Sketch was originally and hastily prepared for the columns of the Evangelical Magazine and Gospel Advocate, without any intention on the part of the author that it should ever be placed before the public in its present form. It was written at a late hour of the night, in moments stolen from needed repose, and when fatigued with the toils of a laborious profession; and was designed as a brief and humble tribute to the memory of its lamented subject, with whom the author had passed many of the most happy hours of his life. Since it has been deemed worthy of being published in the more enduring form of the present little volume, he hopes it may more successfully fulfil its mission; and also that it may exert a salutary influence on those into whose hands it may fall, who are struggling with difficulties and discouragements in life. And likewise that it may lead all who shall read it, to feel a deeper and truer sympathy for the unfortunate and afflicted.

PREFACE.

The volume has been printed, without any revision by the author, and almost without his knowledge, from the columns of the Magazine and Advocate, and there occur some repetitions,—some notes that appear rather odd—and some strange typographical errors. The most important of the typographical errors, the reader will meet with on pages 3, 6, 26, 31, 33, 46, 59.

Boston, May 15, 1845.

REV. W. H. GRISWOLD.

CHAPTER I.

WILLIAM HENRY GRISWOLD was born in Windsor, Hartford county, Conn., on the — day of September, 1813.* He was the son of George and Eunice Griswold, and the youngest of seven children. When he was about four years of age, his father removed with his family from Windsor to Turin, Lewis county, New York. At that time, the section of country in which this family fixed their residence, was new, and possessed but few conveniences and comforts except the supply of the mere physical wants. The inhabitants were few in number and widely separated from each other. Religious worship could hardly be maintained, as a thing of regular occurrence, from Sabbath to Sabbath, except by some such arrangement as that adopted by the Methodists in their circuits. And thus preaching was only occasional, except with the denomination just mentioned; the consequence was, that by far the larger portion of the people, old and young, was at-

* I have not been able to ascertain precisely the day on which Mr. Griswold was born, but I am of opinion that it was in the latter part of September. To all letters of inquiry on this and some other subjects, I have received no answers.

tached in interest and feeling to "the Methodist meeting." Surrounded by such circumstances, and growing up amidst such influences, it was natural that Mr. Griswold should be Methodistic in his views, and should seek among the members of that communion, or at least among its friends, the objects of his religious association. He never, however, became so much engaged in Methodism as to be induced to unite with the church, although, (as I have often heard him say,) he frequently had serious thoughts doing so, until after he met with some of the teachings of Universalism.

The advantages of education afforded in that new and thinly populated section of the country, were, as a matter of course, very few in number and ordinary in quality. A common school was indeed there; but it only professed to teach very imperfectly, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic and Geography. In this school Mr. Griswold acquired a sufficient knowledge of the branches taught, to enable him to transact the usual business of ordinary life. He was, however, not limited in the sources of his knowledge to the district school. From his father, who was well educated, and had been for several years the teacher of a public school in Connecticut, he received important aid in the cultivation and storing of his mind. It was the custom of his father, to spend his evenings at home and read aloud to his family—to such of them, at least, as were not so employed as to prevent them from giving their attention. In this way he placed be-

fore the minds of his children, the contents of all the books and papers which himself—who was a great reader—read during the year.—He kindly indulged them, on any subject which they did not fully understand, to ask him such questions concerning it as they pleased; which he answered in the plainest and most familiar manner possible. Besides, when he had finished a book or article, it was a general rule with him to question them concerning its contents, with much particularity and minuteness. All this was profitable to his son, and stored his mind with a large amount of general information, of which he must otherwise have long remained ignorant. Those who were acquainted with the subject of this sketch, and knew in what part of the country and in what business he spent the early part of his life, were often astonished at the extent and accuracy of his information on almost every subject. But this custom of his father, of reading and conversing familiarly with his children every evening, offers a reasonable and sufficient explanation of the phenomenon; and might at the same time afford some useful suggestions to many parents in our land.

To the same cause Mr. Griswold was more or less indebted, for the change which took place in his religious feelings, and, at length, in his views. A short time before he left his father's house as an apprentice, his father commenced taking the 'Magazine and Advocate,' (published at Utica, N. Y.,) and read it in connection with the Bible, to his family. "And here

it was," says Mr. Griswold in a note to a sermon on the duties of parents, "that I received my first impressions of Universalism.— Though they were not very strong, they yet wrought an immediate change in my feelings; and my attachment to Methodism began to weaken; I began to feel towards mankind differently; a different interest in religion was awakened in my heart, from what I had ever felt before; and I bought me a pocket Bible which I always carried with me for several years. But I was not yet a Universalist; I began to see that the sun was in the heavens, though I only caught now and then a faint glimpse of his beams; and it was not until several years later that I saw him in his splendor. But my first impressions never forsook me."

At the age of fifteen Mr. Griswold left home and went to Watertown, N. Y., as an apprentice to the carpenter's and joiner's trades—for in the country these trades are usually united in the same person—and entered upon his duties, as such, under the direction of his brother, Sidney Griswold. But this connection was of short continuance, being broken up by the death of his brother, which occurred in about six months. He then entered into a similar engagement with a Mr. Gleason, but he also died in a short time. After indulging, for a season, the feelings consequent upon a series of disappointments, fluctuating between hope and despair, he applied to a Mr. Kilburne, who at length received him into his service. It