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# Hosea Ballou, preacher of universal salvation

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Dissertation

HOSEA BALLOU, PREACHER OF UNIVERSAL SALVATION

by

Ernest Cassara

(A.B., Tufts College, 1952; B.D., Crane Theological School,  
Tufts University, 1954)

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

1957

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## INTRODUCTION

### A. Problem

The purpose of this dissertation will be to present a study of the life and thought of Hosea Ballou (1771-1852), the most prominent leader of the Universalist movement in America. It will attempt to put into perspective those events and experiences which played an important part in shaping his character, and will seek to discover the sources of his religious thought. Furthermore, an attempt will be made to present the major facets of his thought as found in his many writings. The more important of these publications will be analyzed and the evolution of his thought traced through the many years of his ministry. Emphasis will be placed on the significance of his theology in the life of his own denomination and in the rise of American religious liberalism.

### B. Significance of the Problem

Hosea Ballou was one of the most influential figures in nineteenth century American religious life. He was a leader of the forces which strove to overturn the accepted theories

of the atonement of Christ and to humanize man's thought of God. His conception of the Deity as a loving Father who will save all of his children did much to undermine the Calvinistic theory of the salvation of an elect few. Yet, outside of the Universalist denomination, Hosea Ballou is practically unknown. There has been no biography written since 1889. There is a great need for a study which will adequately tell the story of his interesting life, and present the leading tenets of his thought.

A proper study of Ballou's theology has never been made. As will be seen below, his past biographers have been content to propagate a myth that he was unaffected by the thought of other men as he formulated his own theology. It has been thought that Ballou was a completely original thinker. Thus past writers have made no attempt to trace the sources of his thought. Therefore, a study in this area is badly needed.

### C. Other studies

Three full-length biographies of Hosea Ballou have appeared. The first was the work of his youngest son, Maturin Murray Ballou.<sup>1</sup> This biography appeared three

---

1. Maturin M. Ballou, Biography of Rev. Hosea Ballou (Boston: 1852).

months after the death of Ballou,<sup>1</sup> and was obviously rushed into print to capture the market before someone else did. That this is more than conjecture is shown by the fact that Maturin Ballou and Thomas Whittemore, Hosea Ballou's closest disciple, had a brief misunderstanding on the subject. Whittemore was preparing his biography when the son proposed that he give way to the family and defer publication.<sup>2</sup>

Maturin Ballou's book is a filial eulogy. Much of it is taken up by long extracts from tributes by well-known Universalists which no doubt appeared in print on the decease of his father. It was hastily prepared and suffers from a lack of orderly arrangement.

Despite the faults of this treatment, it is valuable for the historian and biographer for several reasons. It is not to be doubted that many of the stories and the anecdotes which fill its pages came to the son directly from Hosea Ballou himself. This material, which otherwise might have been lost, is invaluable not only for the insight it gives into Ballou's character but also for the information which it supplies concerning the many adventures in which he was involved.

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1. Hosea Ballou died on June 7, 1852. The publication of his son's biography was advertised in the Trumpet and Universalist Magazine, XXV (September 11, 1852), 50.

2. The misunderstanding created by this proposal can be seen in an exchange of letters in the Trumpet, XXV (February 26, 1853), 50.

One other feature of this biography is helpful. Hosea Ballou never kept a journal,<sup>1</sup> and was reticent about writing an autobiography. But his son Maturin prevailed upon him to record some reminiscences.<sup>2</sup> These are scattered here and there through the son's book and give Ballou's interpretation of some of the events of his life.

Thomas Whittemore's biography of Ballou appeared from 1854 to 1856. It is a long, rambling account of everything--no matter how trivial--that Whittemore could collect concerning his master.<sup>3</sup> Much of it, Whittemore himself claimed, was prepared before Ballou had passed away.<sup>4</sup> Whittemore uses largely the annalistic method. In order to trace the development of many incidents, it is necessary to skip from section to section in his work.

Whittemore's four volumes suffer from his attempt to include everything which Ballou ever did. He obviously kept a file of newspaper clippings and articles and used all of them. Furthermore, he tells of every convention which Ballou

1. Letter from Hosea Ballou to Thomas Whittemore, November 25, 1829. Printed in Thomas Whittemore, The Modern History of Universalism from the Era of the Reformation to the Present Time (Boston: 1830), p. 433n.

2. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, pp. 352-353

3. Thomas Whittemore, Life of Rev. Hosea Ballou; with Accounts of his Writings, and Biographical Sketches of his Seniors and Contemporaries in the Universalist Ministry (4 Volumes; Boston: 1854-1855).

4. Trumpet, XXV (February 19, 1853), 146.

attended in his more than fifty years of preaching. He apparently had a file of old ordination and installation programs, also, for he dutifully lists every one in which Ballou took part, along with the names of the other participants. While these features give the historian much raw material, they are not conducive to interesting biographical study on the part of the general reader.

The biographies of Maturin Ballou and Thomas Whittemore, having been written immediately on the death of Ballou, are naturally lacking in perspective. The men were too close to the events to form any clear judgment; they were too personally involved to be able to see Ballou's weaknesses and failings. Most serious of all, from their work grew the myth that Ballou was purely an original thinker. They believed that his theory of atonement, his unitarian conception of God, his Arian conception of Christ, and many aspects of his thought, were independently arrived at by his study of the Bible. This dissertation will attempt to show that they were mistaken.

Thirty-seven years after Ballou's death, there appeared the third full-length biography to be written. This was the work of the Universalist divine, Oscar Safford.<sup>1</sup> He had not known Ballou. Writing almost two generations later, he

---

1. Oscar Safford, Hosea Ballou: A Marvellous Life Story (Boston: Universalist Publishing House, 1889).

should have had more perspective on his subject. But, on the whole, his book is a denominational eulogy to a past leader. He failed to realize Ballou's indebtedness to other thinkers, and propagated the myth that he was completely original.

Writing in a time when Hosea Ballou's theories concerning no future punishment had come into discredit in the eyes of his denomination, Safford attempts to minimize Ballou's devotion to this thought. As a result, he seriously distorts Ballou's opinions.

Safford's treatment on the whole is light; he makes no serious effort to give an exposition of Ballou's thought. He writes more in the style of a Victorian novelist than in that of a serious biographer; but, in the light of the inadequacies of his two predecessors, his work has been more influential.

Since Safford's day there has appeared a scattering of periodical articles and addresses on Ballou's life and work. These are primarily indebted to the biographies mentioned, for their material. The most notable exceptions are the articles of E. G. Brooks<sup>1</sup> and A. St. John Chambré.<sup>2</sup> Brooks,

1. E. G. Brooks, "Rev. Hosea Ballou," The Universalist Quarterly and General Review, (New Series) VII (October, 1870), 389-420.

2. A. St. John Chambré, "Hosea Ballou and Edward Turner--A Contribution to the 'Truth of History'," Ibid. (January, 1873), 40-49.

who appears to have known Ballou intimately, presents a refreshingly frank portrayal of him--his weaknesses as well as his virtues. Chambre presents a series of letters between Ballou and Edward Turner, the preservation of which has added much to our knowledge of these men and the relations between them during the Restorationist Controversy.

Two lectures delivered in 1903 complete this review of past work in the field. They were both productions of the Universalist minister John Coleman Adams. "Hosea Ballou and the Larger Hope"<sup>1</sup> and Hosea Ballou and the Gospel Renaissance of the Nineteenth Century<sup>2</sup> are appreciative of the contributions of Ballou to the rise of American religious liberalism, but they offer little or no new material.

#### D. Limitations of the study

Although this dissertation will deal with the entire life of Hosea Ballou, the examination of his thought will be limited to certain areas. Interesting as they are, his ideas on educational, political, and social problems, will

---

1. John Coleman Adams, "Hosea Ballou and the Larger Hope," in Pioneers of Religious Liberty in America. Being the Great and Thursday Lectures delivered in Boston in Nineteen Hundred and Three (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1903).

2. John Coleman Adams, Hosea Ballou and the Gospel Renaissance of the Nineteenth Century (Boston: Universalist Publishing House, 1903).

enter this study only when they bear directly on the important areas of his life. No other attempt at exposition of his ideas in these areas will be made. Rather, the intellectual aspect of this study will be confined to his religious or theological thought.

#### E. Procedure.

This dissertation will present a biographical chronological treatment of the life of Hosea Ballou, treating the major events as they occur. There will be variation in the treatment, however. In certain selected instances, the topical approach will be taken. This exception can be illustrated by the case of the relationship between Ballou and the Unitarians of Boston. This topic will be treated at an appropriate place in the dissertation, the matter covered extending over a greater range of years than will be the case in most instances. It is believed that the mixture of these two methods will facilitate a clear presentation of Ballou's religious thought.

Since a critical evaluation of Hosea Ballou's theology will be one of the major purposes of this dissertation, a careful examination will be made of all of the works of note which came from his pen. The evolution of his thought will be traced through the numerous controversies in which he

indulged. The published controversies supply intimations as to what Ballou was reading at various periods of his life. Those works which have a bearing on the evolution of his thought will be set forth and parallels drawn.

An exposition of Ballou's major works will be given in the various periods in his life when they were published. The appearance of certain important ideas will be traced in these publications. Changes in his thought through the various editions of his major works will be noted as they appear.

The materials used in this study are many. Past biographies, of course, will be consulted in addition to all of Hosea Ballou's books and sermons. The periodicals of which he was editor or co-editor over the years will be carefully examined for their bearing on his life and thought. To these should be added the many letters and articles which he contributed to newspapers in the years when he was without editorial duties.

Materials never before consulted provide much insight into the man and his work. His sermon workbook is extant and gives an indication of his approach to sermon preparation. His last will and testament is also available. Many letters of Ballou and his friends have been found in the files of the various churches which he served. These provide many

details not known before. In addition are the records of these Universalist societies. They give information concerning the relationship of Ballou and his parishes.

The biographies and autobiographies of several of his friends and acquaintances have been published and supply much detail which helps fill in the more obscure areas of his life. These, of course, also are helpful in the matter of his relationship to his contemporaries.

Finally, the impressions gathered in many an hour spent at the places which were familiar to the eyes of Hosea Ballou will help to breathe a feeling of reality into the incidents of his life. Visits to his birthplace in Ballou's Dell at Richmond, New Hampshire; travels over the Vermont roads on which he rode horseback; views of the harbor at Portsmouth as he looked on it for several years; these and many other first-hand experiences will, it is hoped, help to bring to this biography an appreciation of the man which books alone cannot give.

## CHAPTER I

### RICHMOND, 1770

Nestled among the hills of the little town of Richmond, New Hampshire, is the beautiful valley still known to some as Ballou's Dell. Here, within the sound of the gushing of several refreshing springs, Elder Maturin Ballou built the log cabin which was to be the home of his large family. With his young sons at his side, he struggled to make the stony soil produce enough to insure, at best, a bare existence.

Maturin and his wife Lydia, who was big with child, had come to Richmond probably in the spring of 1768. The preceding October, Maturin had purchased eighty acres of uncleared land for fifteen pounds.<sup>1</sup> And so they transplanted their home from the civilization of Rhode Island to the wilderness of Cheshire County, New Hampshire. But the hardship was well worth the price paid in toil; for, Maturin was doing the Lord's work. A Baptist preacher, he had come to minister to a growing community of fellow believers.

Maturin Ballou had been born in Providence in 1722.<sup>2</sup>

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1. October 8, 1767. Adin Ballou, An Elaborate History and Genealogy of the Ballous in America (Providence:1888), p. 67.

2. October 30, 1722. Thomas Whittemore, Life of Rev. Hosea Ballou; with Accounts of His Writings, and Biographical Sketches of His Seniors and Contemporaries in the Universalist Ministry (4 vols.; Boston: 1854-55), I, 18.

His great-great-grandfather, the first Ballou in America, was among the co-proprietors with Roger Williams in Rhode Island in 1646.<sup>1</sup> It is thought that this Mathurin Bellow (for so he spelled his name) was descended from the Normans who crossed over to England with William the Conqueror in 1066.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the blood was originally French.

Maturin Ballou was a turner by trade and, according to tradition, he for a time manufactured spinning wheels.<sup>3</sup> He began his preaching in Smithfield (later Lincoln), Rhode Island, in 1752, when he was thirty years old. Like most of the Baptist ministers of the day, he probably had no theological education.<sup>4</sup> Such education was considered unnecessary; the important thing was to have the Spirit speak to you through the Scriptures. Likewise, pecuniary compensation was not expected; Maturin never accepted money for his ministrations.<sup>5</sup> The Baptist preacher of the day earned his daily bread with his hands.

Maturin and Lydia were married in Smithfield in 1744.<sup>6</sup> She was born in 1725<sup>7</sup> in Providence, the daughter of Richard Harris, a Quaker whose forebears had come to the colonies

1. A. Ballou, The Ballous in America, p. v.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 66.
4. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 19.
5. Maturin Murray Ballou, Biography of Rev. Hosea Ballou (Boston, 1852), p. 24.
6. A. Ballou, The Ballous in America, p. 65.
7. February 6, 1725. Ibid.

seeking asylum in the time of Charles and Laud.<sup>1</sup> Aside from these details, little is known of Lydia Harris Ballou. Maturin and Lydia lived the first twenty-four years of their married life in various towns in Rhode Island, laboring, ministering, and raising a large family. Nine of their eleven children were born to them in these years and at least one of them died. Amey lived just six years, dying in 1756.<sup>2</sup>

When the Ballous moved to Richmond in 1768 they brought with them Mary, Lydia, Maturin Junior, David, Nathan, Sarah, and their sickly three-year-old Phebe. Stephen was born to them that September. Benjamin, now a young man of twenty-one, stayed behind in Scituate, Rhode Island,<sup>3</sup> anxious to strike out on his own. So the burden of clearing land, building the cabin, and tilling the soil fell on the shoulders of Maturin, Senior, with the help of young Maturin who was thirteen; David, ten; Nathan, eight. It is no wonder that it was at best a meager existence that the farmer-preacher could wring from the uncooperative soil.

But the Ballous were not without friends in their new wilderness home. Lydia had two brothers, Anthony and Uriah Harris, and two sisters, Mrs. Sweet and Mrs. Phillips, there.<sup>4</sup>

1. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 18.

2. A. Ballou, The Ballous in America, p. 125.

3. Statistics drawn from Ibid., pp. 124-130, passim; Interpretation by the present writer.

4. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 19.

They probably were the determining factor in bringing the Ballous to Richmond. The Harris, Phillips, and Sweet families were among the first settlers of the town. The township's charter had been granted in 1752, but it was not till ten years later that the real movement of population to the area began.<sup>1</sup> When the first town meeting was held in 1765, Uriah and Anthony Harris, Israel Phillips, and Jonathan Sweet, were among the qualified voters.<sup>2</sup>

It was a promising area that these families had come to. When the first census was taken in 1773, Richmond was found to be second in population in the county with 745 residents.<sup>3</sup> By the late eighteenth century its population had risen to almost fourteen hundred.<sup>4</sup> It was probably with great expectation that Maturin and Lydia Ballou threw in their lot with these pioneers.

The people of Richmond were no doubt happy to have this preacher as their own. For they were of a very serious type: Baptists and Quakers. These two sects were to predominate for the first seventy years of the town's history.<sup>5</sup> With their new preacher among them the Baptists were able to form their church in 1768. Not for twelve more years were they

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1. William Bassett, History of the Town of Richmond, Cheshire County, New Hampshire. From its First Settlement, to 1882 (Boston: 1884), pp. 1, 10.

2. Ibid., pp. 27, 31.

3. Ibid., pp. 2, 6.

4. Ibid., p. 244.

5. Ibid., p. 222.

strong enough to put up a meeting house;<sup>1</sup> but meeting houses were not important to these simple people. They met in the homes of their leaders: when not at Maturin's place, they would gather at the homesteads of Elder Artemus Aldrich and Deacon Simon Thayer.<sup>2</sup>

Maturin Ballou was their kind of man. He was plain-spoken, like themselves. His sermons were earnest, and only occasionally eloquent.<sup>3</sup> But, it was as a man that they probably liked him best. His unostentatious manner, which bordered on meekness; but, above all, his forgiving spirit, explain the high respect and influence this person had among his people.<sup>4</sup> Maturin took his Calvinism seriously. He was, on occasion, light-hearted and would tell a good story or a joke--but, he would soon sigh and repent his indulgence of this part of his nature.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the poverty and trials of this pioneer existence, life held much happiness for Maturin and Lydia. The latter part of the year 1770 was of particular joy for Maturin "knew" Lydia, and soon she could tell her husband that again the Lord had smiled on them and that she was with child.

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1. Ibid., p. 223.
  2. Ibid.
  3. A. Ballou, The Ballous in America, p. 68.
  4. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 16.
  5. Oscar Safford, Hosea Ballou: A Marvellous Life Story (Boston: Universalist Publishing House, 1889), p. 18.

September in another way held happiness for the Ballous. The Baptist community now officially set aside Elder Maturin Ballou as its minister. On September 27, in one of the most solemn moments of his life, Maturin was ordained a preacher of the gospel of Christ and a minister to his people.<sup>1</sup> It was a proud and happy father who was thus enabled to perform the marriage ceremony of his first daughter to marry and to make him a grandfather.

Mary was the oldest child of Maturin and Lydia; she was the product of their first year of married bliss. Now, at what was no doubt considered the "advanced" age of twenty-five, she was to leave the parental home. Her spouse was David Bullock of Rehoboth, Massachusetts, whom she had met and loved before her family had made its trek to the wilderness. David had purchased a farm in Richmond and planned to settle near Mary's kin. So, in his own home on October twentieth, Maturin gave the blessing of church and state to his beloved Mary and her chosen David.<sup>2</sup> To their new home the young couple went. And soon Mary would share with her mother the joys of pregnancy.

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1. Bassett, History of Richmond, p. 223.  
2. Statistics derived from A. Ballou, The Ballous in America, p. 124. Interpretation by the present writer.

## CHAPTER II

### THE EARLY YEARS

A son was born to Lydia Ballou in the Spring. Maturin and Lydia turned to the pages of God's Word for his name; their choice was prophetic.

Hosea Ballou was born on April 30, 1771,<sup>1</sup> the last of eleven children. The home into which he came had little wealth. In his first three years in Richmond the lot of Maturin Ballou was not much improved. Since he spent much of his time in the duties of his ministry--without pay--and, since he had nothing but the land, his family was in great need. His children went without the most common necessities; it is said that little Hosea often was without underclothes, shoes, and stockings, in the coldest of winters.<sup>2</sup> But, the Ballou children probably were unaware of their plight, for

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1. The spot in Ballou's Dell where the log cabin stood is marked by a granite stone with the inscription:

Birthplace of  
Hosea Ballou  
1771  
Erected 1903

It was erected through the efforts of Hosea Starr Ballou as part of the centennial celebration of the Winchester Profession of Faith. See The Winchester Centennial, 1803-1903. Historical Sketch of the Universalist Profession of Belief Adopted at Winchester, N. H., September 22, 1803 (Boston: Universalist Publishing House, 1903), pp. 210, 212.

2. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, pp. 24-25.

it was a home of love.

Hosea was not to remember his mother's tender affection, for when he was twenty months old, Lydia Ballou died.<sup>1</sup> There is no record of what took her life just short of her forty-sixth year. Hosea was too young to appreciate the sorrow of his family as the body of his mother was laid to rest in the hill-side cemetery not far from their home. On the newly covered grave was placed a small, crude stone with the letters "L. B." In later years he was to say, "...The Treasure was gone before I could realize its value."<sup>2</sup>

It is not good for man to be alone. So it was that within a year Maturin took to himself another Lydia. Little is known of Lydia Bliss of Attleboro, Massachusetts, except that she was married to Maturin Ballou on September 15, 1774.<sup>3</sup> It is believed that she died in 1790 or 1791.<sup>4</sup> Maturin needed this helpmate, for daughter Lydia, now twenty, had married Samuel Moses a short time after her mother's death<sup>5</sup> and had gone off with her Sam to Warwick, Massachusetts,<sup>6</sup> to live near the new home of sister Mary.<sup>7</sup> Nine-year-old Sarah and

1. December 21, 1773. A. Ballou, The Ballous in America, p. 66.

2. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 22.

3. A. Ballou, The Ballous in America, p. 66. There is disagreement regarding her name. Bassett, History of Richmond, p. 280, gives it as Lydia Blois.

4. A. Ballou, The Ballous in America, p. 66.

5. Ibid., p. 125.

6. Statistics in Ibid., pp. 125-126, 296. Interpretation by the present writer.

7. Ibid., p. 124.

seven-year-old Phebe were the only females now at home to cook and to keep house.

Past biographers have taken no cognizance of Hosea Ballou's stepmother and have drawn a verbal picture of Maturin Ballou as father and mother to the young child. That their inference was correct, however, is seen by the fact that Hosea himself never referred to the influence of his stepmother. The boy formed a deep attachment for his father, and it is probable that his later thought of God as a heavenly Father who is capable of both love and chastisement because He truly loves his children, was not a little influenced by his earthly father.

How I used to cherish a kind word from my father, when I was a boy! He was in some respects an austere man; and when I was born, being the youngest of our large family, he had got to be advanced in years, and looked with a more serious and practical eye on the events of life and all things about us. He was Puritanic, strictly religious, as he interpreted the meaning of that word, and his mind was ever engrossed upon serious matters. But when he put his hand sometimes on my head, and told me I had done well, that the labor I had performed might have been more poorly done by older hands, or that I was a good and faithful boy, my heart was electrified beyond measure; and I remember his words and smile, even now, with delight.<sup>1</sup>

Hosea's earliest years were lived in unsettled times, both in state and church. He was barely five when the Revolution broke out. Being distant from the sea-coast, Richmond was never really in danger from British troops but

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1. Quoted by M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 299.

the men of his town, nevertheless, did their part. Several joined the regiment recruited among the Massachusetts towns of Worcester County and fought in the Battle of Bunker Hill.<sup>1</sup>

Agitation did not cease with the end of the war. In the late 70's and early 80's sentiment in the Cheshire County area was very strong in favor of becoming a part of the newly-formed state of Vermont.<sup>2</sup> The town of Richmond went so far as to vote such action in the March town meeting of 1781.<sup>3</sup> Long after the plans for secession from New Hampshire had been frustrated, feeling ran high in the area.<sup>4</sup> It was probably in these years that young Hosea first heard the name and exploits of a Green Mountain warrior by the name of Ethan Allen. Hosea did not then know how greatly his life was to be changed by the thoughts of "Gen'r'l Allen."

Of more immediacy to the Ballous was the agitation among Baptists in Richmond over their minister's legal rights. The royal charter of the town had called for the setting aside of certain tracts of land to be used to support ecclesiastical activities. One section of this glebe land was reserved for the Episcopal Church, one for the Society to Propagate the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and one for the first settled minister of the town. Maturin Ballou

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1. Bassett, History of Richmond, p. 59.  
2. Ibid., pp. 81ff.  
3. Ibid., p. 85.  
4. Ibid., p. 88.

was that first settled minister and, by right, the land belonged to him. But such was the opposition on the part of those residents of non-Baptist persuasion that the self-effacing Maturin deeded his share of glebe land to the town of Richmond.<sup>1</sup> During the course of this controversy in 1776 the Baptists in town were split asunder. Some, less meek than their minister, held out for his right to the land. Others appear to have sided with the opposition.

The practical result of this division of feeling was a division in the church. A number followed the lead of Elder Artemus Aldrich and formed a second society of Baptists.<sup>2</sup> This schism lasted for about thirteen years. Maturin Ballou's thoughts regarding this break in Baptist ranks are not known. But it would appear that his position was not a happy one. Three years later, after a ministry of eleven years, he asked to be dismissed as pastor of his flock.<sup>3</sup> He was then fifty-seven years old so that age does not appear to have been the determining factor. He, however, did not give up preaching. It is said that he spent the remainder of his life preaching in the neighboring towns.<sup>4</sup>

The effect of this schism on young Hosea can only be surmised, but it is probably more than speculation that he

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1. Bassett, History of Richmond, pp. 223-224.

2. Ibid., p. 227.

3. Ibid.

4. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 21.

had the disillusionment of this event in mind when he later wrote: "... I have often seen, in the same churches, persons at such variance, about matters of their religion, that truth seemed not to be regarded, in the least, on either side; each would strive to crush his brother, until two parties were formed, and a whole town set in an uproar."<sup>1</sup>

Hosea had his first conscious experience with death when the news came in January of 1778 that his sister Mary had died in Warwick.<sup>2</sup> More education in the ways of life came when brother David took a wife, Mercy Harris, in January of 1781.<sup>3</sup> Hosea knew her well, for she was his cousin. And he was again in his Sabbath best when father married sister Sarah to Moses Wheaton the following October.<sup>4</sup>

Hosea's "formal" education proceeded along the usual lines of a pioneer community. The learning he gained was with his father's help, for there was no school. The family library was not large. In fact, it consisted in all of three "volumes." Of course, the Bible was the prize possession of the family. Also useful was an old dictionary of pre-John-

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1. Hosea Ballou, A Treatise on Atonement; in which the Finite Nature of Sin is Argued, its Causes and Consequences as Such; the Necessity and Nature of Atonement, and its Glorious Consequences in the Final Reconciliation of All Men to Holiness and Happiness (Randolph, Vermont: 1805), p. 51.

2. A. Ballou, The Ballous in America, p. 124.

3. Ibid., p. 126.

4. Ibid., p. 129.

sonian vintage. The library was made complete by "a well-thumbed pamphlet of the scriptural story of the tower of Babel."<sup>1</sup> It can be said in truth that from the beginning the Bible was Hosea's book. He pored over its pages, teaching himself new words, and thrilling to the adventures of the men of old.

Paper, pen and ink, were luxuries not to be afforded. Instead, Hosea stripped for himself pieces of birch bark to serve as paper; coals from the fire served as pencils. With these utensils he would lie before the fire at night laboriously learning to write. By the time he was sixteen he had taught himself to read and write with a fair amount of ease.<sup>2</sup>

Chores there were to do, but Hosea had much time to roam the surrounding hills. Ballou's Dell is a place of natural beauty. As one beholds it today, it is not difficult to see how Hosea Ballou came by the love of nature which is mirrored in many of his writings. Fortunately, the Ballou farm stands, with the exception of the original house, much as it did in Hosea's day. It is one of the comparatively few farms in the area which was not abandoned as the tide of migration swept many Richmondites west. Still can be seen the green dell and the sudden rise of the surrounding hills

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1. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 30.

2. Ibid., pp. 29-30.

as they looked to the youth's eyes. And still run the cool, clear springs which in his day were the source of much joy.

In such surroundings, Hosea Ballou lived the outdoor life. Even in later days when circumstances demanded much time in the study, he always insisted that physical exertion in the out-of-doors was absolutely necessary for physical well-being.

Hosea was over six feet when he reached his full growth. He was erect, with a ruddy face, dark hair, and sparkling blue eyes.<sup>1</sup> The work he did on the farm no doubt helped maintain his good health.

Among the boys of the neighborhood Hosea demonstrated early his natural talent for leadership. He excelled in the sports of the country town of that day. He was a good runner, a skilled wrestler, and showed his brawn in the popular sport of "pitching the bar," i.e. hurling the crowbar javelin style.<sup>2</sup> His friends soon learned to trust his leadership in other ways. By nature straightforward and completely open, he was often called upon to fill the rôle of umpire in disputes on the field of sport.<sup>3</sup>

Important as these things are to a boy, Hosea's mind was often on more weighty matters: sin and salvation. Maturin was deeply concerned for the spiritual well-being

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1. Safford, Hosea Ballou, p. 21.

2. Ibid., p. 14; M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 34.

3. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 34.

of his children. He prayed often for their conversion to the ways of God, calling them by name in the family prayers.<sup>1</sup> His children were guilty of no particular evil, but, according to his Calvinistic outlook, this did not guarantee them a place on God's roll of the Elect.<sup>2</sup> For this he prayed mightily. Furthermore, he was careful that they learn well the religious tenets of his particular denomination. Hosea, thus, was well-up on the doctrines of Calvinism at an early age.<sup>3</sup> He was taught that he, like all men, had inherited the sin of the first parents of the race and was thus born into the world totally depraved. Because of this inheritance, the greater part of men were doomed to eternal misery after death. But for an elect portion of mankind things would be different, for God had provided a way in which they would be saved. These fortunate ones, sometime during their lives, would feel the working of the Holy Spirit upon them which would manifest itself in the ecstatic experience of conversion. But this experience came to very few; it was the belief of the Baptists who surrounded Hosea that "not more than one in a thousand" would be chosen.<sup>4</sup> Of course, along with this central belief, he learned all of the theological

1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 41.

2. Ibid., I, 42.

3. Letter from Hosea Ballou to Thomas Whittemore, November 25, 1829, in Whittemore, Modern History of Universalism, p. 433n.

4. Hosea Ballou quoted in M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 23.

jargon of the day when such topics were the province of the average layman.

I was well acquainted with the most common arguments which were used in support of predestination, election, reprobation, the fall of man, the penal sufferings of Christ for the elect, the justice of reprobation, and many other particulars, such as regard the moral agency of man and his inability to regenerate himself, the sovereignty and irresistibility of regenerating grace, &c., &c.<sup>1</sup>

Hosea had a very inquisitive mind from his youngest years; he did not accept the belief of his family without question. The trait which was to predominate his mental make-up is seen early in his youth in the radical questionings which made his father somewhat uncomfortable. Hosea was particularly absorbed by the problem of free will and necessity. One day his theological precocity caught his father completely off guard. He asked Maturin: "Suppose I had the skill and power out of an inanimate substance to make an animate, and should make one, at the same time knowing that this creature of mine would suffer everlasting misery,--would my act of creating this creature be an act of goodness?"

Maturin was visibly shaken by his young boy's question; he did not reply.<sup>2</sup> Hosea would have to find his own answer.

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1. Letter from Hosea Ballou to Thomas Whittemore, November 25, 1829, in Whittemore, Modern History of Universalism, p. 434n.

2. Autobiographical sketch of Hosea Ballou quoted by M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 36.

## CHAPTER III

### "THE GREAT REFORMATION"

To the south of Richmond, over the boundary line between New Hampshire and Massachusetts, is the town of Warwick. To Warwick in 1771 there came Caleb Rich, a dreamer of dreams and a seer of visions. Rich was born in Sutton, Massachusetts, in 1750, the son of Congregationalist parents. In his youth, however, his father was converted by the Baptists. The fact that his mother remained Congregationalist appears to have started Caleb thinking about religion. He turned the pages of the Bible, hoping to find the truth.<sup>1</sup> He appears to have been a mystic and capable of great emotion. Although he affiliated with the Baptists when he moved to his farm in Warwick, through a series of dreams and visions he came to a belief in universal salvation.<sup>2</sup> When the Revolutionary War broke out, Rich enlisted and marched to Cambridge. But it was not long before he found that he did not take to army life. Obtaining a substitute to serve for him, he was discharged and returned to civilian life.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Richard Eddy, Universalism in America. A History (Boston: Universalist Publishing House, 1891-1894), I, 168.

2. Ibid., pp. 168-169.

3. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 45.

In the spring of 1778, as the result of several dreams, Rich began to preach in Warwick; and soon he extended his activities across the border into Richmond and Jaffrey.<sup>1</sup> As he won adherents to the cause, he found himself minister to a new church. The "General Society", as it was called, consisted of believers in Warwick, Richmond, and Jaffrey.<sup>2</sup> A few years after the formation of this group, it was decided that Rich should be ordained. The ordination took place at Richmond with Adams Streeter, an itinerant Baptist-turned-Universalist, assisting. It was a big occasion for Richmond, with over three hundred persons attending.<sup>3</sup> It is not certain when Rich's ordination took place; but it is likely that it was in the early 1780's when Hosea Ballou was from ten to twelve years old. There is no way of knowing if he was present on that gala occasion, but he certainly must have been aware of it.

Universalism did not come to Richmond without opposition. The new doctrine was despised wherever it was introduced. For it seemed to undercut the very basis of religion and morality. To preach that all men would be saved cut to the core of Calvinism and its central tenets of election and reprobation. Furthermore, what was to keep people on the straight and narrow path if the fear of hell were taken.

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1. Eddy, Universalism in America, I, 171.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 28.

away? It was certain, -- and Hosea heard this repeated with authority many times, -- it was certain that a person who believed in universal salvation would be guilty of the lowest sort of vileness. He would lie, cheat, indulge in dissipation, and commit sin of every variety. He would not hesitate to steal and, what was worse, to murder! The lives of everyone, including his own family, were not safe.<sup>1</sup>

Hosea heard and believed these charges made against Universalists.<sup>2</sup> It must have been a very great shock when it became known that Caleb Rich had found friends in the household of one of the Ballous. A distant cousin of Maturin, James Ballou, and his sons, James, Jr., and Silas, had been converted to the new heresy!<sup>3</sup> And, what must have been worse, they were outspoken in their advocacy. James Ballou and Caleb Rich would often attend the Baptist meeting and, when the meeting was over, debate their new-found doctrines. It is natural to assume that now that relatives had accepted the new doctrine, it would be more difficult for the Ballous to refrain from coming into contact with it.

In his middle 'teens, Hosea spent several of his summers

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1. Hosea Ballou, An Examination of the Doctrine of Future Retribution, on the Principles of Morals, Analogy, and the Scriptures (Boston, 1834), p. 172.

2. Ibid.

3. Safford, Hosea Ballou, p. 32.

away from home, working on the farms of relatives.<sup>1</sup> His oldest brother, Benjamin, was now living in Guilford, Vermont, farming, and preaching the Baptist faith. Hosea enjoyed his visits to Guilford, for he and Benjamin's son Asahel who was, of course, actually his own nephew, got along like brothers. They were both the same age and, as Hosea said later, could not have been closer had they been twins.<sup>2</sup> Asahel thought so much of Hosea that when he married he named his first child after him.

Another summer was spent at Putney, Vermont, where Maturin, Junior, was farming and preaching. Maturin was a very devout Baptist. He never married, and was probably very happy to have the company of his youngest brother during the summer.

Things changed at home in these years. Hosea's sister Phebe, who had never been well, died in young womanhood, lamented by all. Brother Nathan had married Mary Holbrook,<sup>3</sup> and had stayed on the farm to take care of the father in his declining years.

The year 1789 was one of the most important in Hosea

1. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 32.

2. Hosea Starr Ballou, Hosea Ballou, 2d; D.D., First President of Tufts College: His Origin, Life, and Letters (Boston, 1896), p. 16.

3. November 19, 1786. A. Ballou, The Ballous in America, p. 128.

Ballou's life. It appears that for sometime, probably under the influence of the new universalist ideas, he was troubled by the Calvinistic doctrine of eternal reprobation. How could God be good if He were responsible for the everlasting misery of most of His children? His thoughts along this line had not yet led him to the point where he was ready to renounce the faith of his childhood. But it is likely that Caleb Rich and James Ballou and his sons gave him little rest on this matter. Rich and Ballou, as before stated, took every opportunity to spread their views. Since Hosea always had a knack for debating, it is most probable that many an hour was spent in trying to meet the arguments of the Universalists. Hosea found that his arguments led him to either of two conclusions: either God would save all men, or else it had to be admitted that God is partial. This dilemma gave him no rest; for he was never to be satisfied to take a position which he could not defend.<sup>1</sup>

In January of 1789 two evangelists, Blaisdell and Marshall by name, came to Richmond.<sup>2</sup> Under the heat of their preaching the Baptists of the town, split for thirteen years, were welded together. The revival, which ever since has been

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1. Letter from Hosea Ballou to Thomas Whittemore, November 25, 1829, in Whittemore, Modern History of Universalism, p. 434n.

2. Bassett; History of Richmond, p. 227, gives the date as January, 1790. Other sources, including Ibid., favor 1789.

known in Richmond history as the "Great Reformation", was responsible for the conversion of over one hundred persons.<sup>1</sup> Among this number was nineteen-year-old Hosea Ballou.<sup>2</sup> He and his young friends were swept by the excitement right into church membership.<sup>3</sup> In mid-winter they were immersed in ice cold water<sup>4</sup> and so became professing Baptists.

If Hosea thought that his profession of faith and baptism would quiet his troubled mind, he was wrong. He continued to be pressed by doubts:

I was much troubled in my mind because I thought I did not stand in such fear of the divine wrath as I ought to do, or as others had done before they found acceptance with God. I well remember that as I was returning home from a conference meeting, one evening, when about a quarter of a mile from home, being alone, I stopped under a large tree, and, falling on my knees, prayed as well as I could for the favor I sought.<sup>5</sup>

But peace of mind was not to be his until he could reconcile his faith in the goodness of God with the doctrine of eternal reprobation. He could not believe that God would place in his heart the desire that all men be saved if such

1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 49.

2. Letter of Hosea Ballou to Thomas Whittemore, November 25, 1829, in Whittemore, Modern History of Universalism, p. 434n.

3. Ibid.

4. Safford, Hosea Ballou, p. 25.

5. Quoted by M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 39. See Hosea Ballou, A Treatise on Atonement (Randolph, Vermont, 1805), p. 124: "That multitudes have been in great fear of being rejected by the Almighty, at last, I have no doubt; for I confess those torments have been mine, in no small degree."

a thing were not possible.<sup>1</sup>

It appears that the six months after his "conversion" was the determining period in Hosea's thought. He applied himself to reading the Bible, grasping onto every text which might possibly favor the Universalist position. It is doubtful if there was any Universalist literature available to him at this time, but the story is told that one day his father found him reading a book tainted with such sentiments. Maturin informed his son that he would not tolerate any such stuff in his house. Hosea bowed to his father's authority. A few days later, however, Maturin found Hosea reading beside the wood pile.

"What book are you reading there?" asked the old man.

"A Universalist book," was the answer, given in a respectful tone. Maturin grumbled his discontent and headed back to the house. From there he watched his son place the book on the wood pile and leave. When the lad was out of sight, he headed straight for the wood pile, probably with the intention of destroying the dangerous book. When he picked it up, he found that it was the Bible!<sup>2</sup>

That spring Hosea travelled to New York with his brother Stephen to spend the summer working on a farm at Westfield

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1. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, pp. 39-40.

2. Ibid., 41.

(later Hartford).<sup>1</sup> After the long day's work was done Hosea spent the evening studying the Bible seeking the answer to his problem: could the Universalists be right? On turning the pages he would now and again run across a text which might be used to substantiate the claims of Caleb Rich. Such a passage as Romans 5:18 was particularly striking: "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." The "free gift" of justification was given not to just a few, an Elect, but to all men--or, so this passage seemed to say. How could this be explained by the orthodox?

Stephen and Hosea attended the Baptist meetings in Westfield and sat under the preaching of an Elder Brown. Being apprehensive that Hosea was being misled into the errors of Universalism, Stephen arranged for discussion with the good elder after the Sabbath meeting. Stephen hoped that Brown could show Hosea that the Universalists were preaching false doctrine and that he should settle down in his newly-professed faith. With a very confident air Elder Brown seated himself and requested that Hosea produce from the Bible just one text which seemed to him to favor the dangerous error of Universal salvation, so that he could

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<sup>1</sup>. Letter of Hosea Ballou to Thomas Whittemore, November 25, 1829, in Whittemore, Modern History of Universalism, p. 435n.

demonstrate that the young man was misinterpreting the sacred writ. Hosea opened his Bible to the passage which had given him so much uncertainty, to Romans, chapter five, verse eighteen. He directed the elder to the passage and told him that he found it impossible to reconcile the words of Paul with the Calvinistic doctrine of eternal reprobation. If Paul said all men would be justified as a free gift, how could the endless misery of any human being be true? Elder Brown immediately began to speak in a very loud voice, but he was not answering the question. When he stopped, Hosea informed him that what he had said had nothing to do with the question and pointed out that the same "all men" who were condemned in the first part of the text were the same "all men" who were given justification as a free gift in the second part of the text. Elder Brown became confused and flustered, and obviously angered by the correction of the young man. He showed so much heat that those present found it discrete to end the "conference."

Stephen was very much upset by this incident; he was sorry he had even suggested such a meeting, telling Hosea, "As he could by no means answer you, and as he manifested anger, you will think you had the best of the argument, and will feel encouraged to indulge favorable thoughts of

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Universalism."<sup>1</sup>

Hosea continued to read his Bible and continued to ask questions of those who opposed the doctrine.<sup>2</sup> By this process of defending Universalism against its opposers, he probably hastened his own conversion. For by the time he returned home in the fall he was thoroughly convinced of the truth of Universal salvation.<sup>3</sup> So, the year which began with his baptism and acceptance of the Baptist faith, ended with his departure from that faith and his acceptance of the despised gospel of Universalism.<sup>4</sup>

If Hosea expected an unfriendly reaction from his family to the news that he had been converted, he must have been pleasantly surprised. For, the edge was taken off his announcement by the fact that while he was away for the summer his older brother David had also seen the light. He came home to find David already preaching the new gospel. Who was responsible for this change is not definitely known, but it is safe to assume that it was the result of the

1. Letter of Hosea Ballou to Thomas Whittemore, November 25, 1829, in Whittemore, Modern History of Universalism, pp. 435-436n.

2. Ibid., p. 436n

3. Ibid.

4. Writing fifteen years later, Ballou shows a great sympathy with those who, despite all his arguments are still not convinced. "The time has been, when I believed as little of the doctrine as you now do; I never adopted the belief of universal holiness and happiness out of choice, but from the force of real or supposed evidence." See Treatise on Atonement, 1805 ed., p. 214.

activities of Caleb Rich.<sup>1</sup> The unity of the Ballou family was not broken by these conversions to Universalism. Whatever Maturin Ballou thought of the dangerous doctrine, he loved his sons nonetheless. The brothers and sisters were as close as they ever had been.<sup>2</sup>

The attitude of Hosea's neighbors was somewhat different. His fellow church members strove mightily to save him from the terrible abyss. But the debates, as might be expected, only helped to further his acceptance of the new doctrine.<sup>3</sup> Having failed by the method of persuasion, the church now took stern action. It was feared that Hosea's great influence among the youth of the town would be responsible for leading many of them astray. So the Baptist church of Richmond officially excommunicated him, and served him with a copy of its action which stated that no fault was to be found with him except that he believed that God would save all men.<sup>4</sup> Thus the heretic was cut off from the body of the elect.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 28.

2. Ibid., I, 65.

3. Ibid., I, 60-61.

4. Letter from Hosea Ballou to Thomas Whittemore, November 25, 1829, in Whittemore, Modern History of Universalism, p. 436n.

5. Although Ballou was forced to leave the Baptist church, he always had a tender spot in his heart for the church of his childhood: "I have always felt towards this people as one feels towards his family, and though the religion of Christ consists in love to all men, I have a peculiar feeling for the Baptists." Quoted by M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 39.

Hosea, on his return from New York, went to live with David on his farm. Mercy Ballou had died that spring,<sup>1</sup> leaving David with three young children to care for. This two year sojourn with David helped confirm both in their new-found faith. Hosea no doubt learned much from this brother who was thirteen years older than himself. David was a meditative, philosophical type of person,<sup>2</sup> who was not prone to accept an idea without thorough examination. In this, Hosea followed his brother. David was particularly adept at the Socratic method, although he probably had never heard the term.

Alas for the opposer who once began to answer the simple and easy questions; while he yet could discover no dilemma towards which they were carrying him, he suddenly found himself fast enclosed, helpless, bound tight with his own chain.<sup>3</sup>

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1. April 28, 1789. A Ballou, The Ballous in America, p. 126.

2. Safford, Hosea Ballou, p. 38.

3. Hosea Ballou, 2d, "Rev. Hosea Ballou; His parentage and Early Life," The Universalist Quarterly and General Review, XI (April, 1854), 186n.

## CHAPTER IV

### "THE WRITTEN JEHOVAH"

It is readily understandable that Hosea Ballou decided to devote his life to preaching the gospel. Not only had his father spent most of his life expounding holy writ, but, also, three brothers, one by one, had taken up the cause. Benjamin, the oldest, although primarily a farmer, was preaching the Baptist faith (until, eventually, he was converted by Hosea<sup>1</sup>). The pious Maturin, Junior, preached Baptism until struck down by death at the young age of thirty-five.<sup>2</sup> And, of course, David was now preaching the gospel of Universal salvation. Add to these the probable influence of Caleb Rich and kinsman James Ballou, and it is not difficult to see that Hosea had justification for his choice. He also had ability. If his later writings can be used as a criterion, he was adept at the art of debate, so necessary in that day of theological combat, and was equipped with powerful logic.

Hosea, however, had had no schooling. He must have realized the handicap for he soon took measures to overcome

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1. A. Ballou, The Ballous in America, p. 124.

2. He died just as Hosea was beginning his preaching career, ca. November 28, 1790. Statistic from Ibid., p. 126. Interpretation by the present writer.

this limitation. The Friends of Richmond had for sometime been conducting a private school at various places in the town. With the building of their meeting house in 1790,<sup>1</sup> the school was moved there.<sup>2</sup> Hosea, now in his nineteenth or twentieth year, attended the school with several of his young friends. Although with the help of his father he had learned to read and write, he still had little understanding of English Grammar. With great determination he set himself to the task of making up for lost time. He studied night and day, taking little food and getting little sleep.<sup>3</sup>

Hosea was not satisfied with this, at best, elementary education. With the money he had earned working away from home during the past few summers, he enrolled at the academy then being conducted at the Cheshire County town of Chesterfield on the Connecticut River boundary between New Hampshire and Vermont. Here he received what he considered excellent instruction. He found it necessary to study night and day to keep up with those who had received the educational advantages he lacked.<sup>4</sup> This experience was invaluable for the first time in his life he was in an atmosphere of

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1. Bassett, History of Richmond, p. 128.

2. The meeting house, now a private dwelling, with the plain Quaker grave yard at the rear, is still standing at Richmond Four Corners.

3. See his own description in M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 48.

4. Ibid., pp. 49-50.

culture and had the opportunity to gain a real appreciation of the power of education.<sup>1</sup> Professor Logan, Principal of the Academy, took a particular interest in Hosea and was pleased to see that, despite his lack of educational background, he was able to carry his work well. At the end of his stay at the school Principal Logan awarded him a certificate which Hosea was to find very valuable in the days ahead, for it enabled him a little later to set himself up as a schoolmaster.<sup>2</sup>

Hosea's immediate concern, however, was to preach. But his first experience at this art was painful and discouraging. In the fall of 1791<sup>3</sup> he made his first appearance in his new role at the home of old Baptist Deacon Simon Thayer who now was professing the new faith. Both David Ballou and Caleb Rich were present; this fact probably did not help the situation. Hosea's first sermon was preached on the text "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption...."<sup>4</sup> It was such a terrible failure that David and Caleb Rich began to doubt his ability.<sup>5</sup> Hosea, brow covered with perspiration, could just not seem to get the

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1. Ibid., p. 49.

2. Ibid., p. 50.

3. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 72.

4. I Cor. 1:30.

5. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 53.

words out.

But he was determined that his preaching career was not to end on such an ignominious note. He must give himself another chance. So it was that a short time later he accompanied David over to Brattleboro, Vermont, where his brother had a Sabbath's engagement.<sup>1</sup> David preached in the morning, and, probably against his better judgment, allowed his brother to hold forth in the evening. But this second appearance was little better than his first. Sebastian Streeter, later a prominent Universalist preacher, who was present on this occasion, gave this description of the event:

The exordium went off very well; but, as he proceeded with the discussion, he often hesitated; now and then came to a pause, and was finally obliged to sit down before he had reached the original design of the discourse.

He was deeply mortified. He was discouraged.<sup>2</sup> But such is often the experience of the fledgling preacher. Discouraged as he was, Hosea's friends would not let him give up. He tried again, and this time, as he said himself, he "met with no remarkable failure...."<sup>3</sup> Little by little his confidence grew and he no longer considered abandoning his chosen profession.

From the beginning Hosea preached extempore. On a certain occasion, however, he decided to prepare a manuscript,

1. Ibid., p. 54.

2. Quoted by M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 315.

3. Quoted by Ibid., p. 54

for his father and two of his preacher brothers were to be present and he wanted to impress them. But rather than helping, the manuscript hindered him; he was not used to reading from the page, but, preferred to look at the congregation as he talked. As he proceeded he kept lifting his eyes from the manuscript so as to look into the faces of his audience; when he looked back to the page he invariably lost his place. Finally, not able to stand it any longer, he took the manuscript, rolled it up and slipped it into his coat, saying as he did, "I shall weary your patience with these notes." Freed of this hindrance, he went on to preach his sermon with great fluency. Sebastian Streeter who was present noticed large tears in old Maturin Ballou's eyes.<sup>1</sup>

In September of 1791, Hosea went with David down to Oxford, Massachusetts, to attend for the first time the General Convention of Universalists.<sup>2</sup> The convention, despite its name, was made up of a few scattered churches in New England. The movement was still new, there being just sixteen to eighteen Universalist preachers in the entire United States.<sup>3</sup>

It was at this Oxford convention that Hosea met John Murray for the first time. Murray, the most influential of

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1. Ibid., pp. 317, 319.

2. Ibid., p. 53

3. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 80.

the early Universalist preachers, was ministering in Gloucester. A Methodist of the Whitefield variety, he had come under the influence of James Rely in London and had been converted to the doctrine of Universal salvation. From his arrival in America in 1770 to now he had been an active itinerant for the cause. Murray was a confirmed Relyan in theology. Rely in his work Union<sup>1</sup> set forth his belief that even as all men died in Adam, so they were all made alive in Christ. Man really sinned in Adam (as opposed to the idea of imputation) by actual participation, so close is he to his first parent. By the same token, man is also in Christ who is truly the head of every man. Christ was actually guilty of the sin of man and was justly punished, thus satisfying the justice of God. With the exception of their modification of the doctrine of imputation, Rely and Murray were Calvinistic in outlook.

Although Hosea Ballou had no doubt heard of John Murray before meeting him for the first time at Oxford, he was not familiar with his theological position.<sup>2</sup> By the time he

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1. James Rely, Union: or a Treatise of the Consanguinity and Affinity between Christ and His Church (Philadelphia: 1843) (Original London edition, 1759. Among the early American editions: Boston, 1779; Providence, 1782.)

2. Letter of Hosea Ballou to Thomas Whittemore, February 25, 1829, in Whittemore, Modern History of Universalism, p. 436n.

learned of the Rellyan system, he had become settled in his distinctly different theological position.<sup>1</sup> At this first meeting, little could John Murray realize that this young man was to lead the denomination from its Calvinistic, Trinitarian, foundation to a radically different unitarian base. At this time, however, Hosea was preaching a modified Calvinism. He accepted the Calvinistic version of the atonement of Christ for man's sin and the theory of imputed righteousness.<sup>2</sup> But Christ's righteousness was imputed not to just an elect few but to all mankind.

The next few years Hosea spent in teaching school and in itinerant preaching. His certificate from the Chesterfield Academy helped procure him his first teaching post at Bellingham, Massachusetts, after which he taught in Rhode Island at Foster and Scituate.<sup>3</sup> While teaching in Rhode Island he spent the summer months making extended preaching trips.<sup>4</sup> He must have made a rustic appearance, dressed as he was in homespun. But the country people could understand him, for he spoke their language, illustrating his points with stories of the land and its people. They soon learned to appreciate his wit, too. To the earthy challenger of his gospel of Universal salvation he gave an earthy answer.

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 58.

4. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 92.

"What would you do with a man who died reeking in sin and crime?"

"I think it would be a good plan to bury him."<sup>1</sup>

In September of 1794 Hosea rode over to Oxford to attend the General Convention. Here he saw his fellow preachers and exchanged stories and experiences. In his three years of preaching he had gained a good reputation and his colleagues were no doubt eager to hear his stories.

Hosea Ballou received ordination at this convention in a most unusual, and impromptu, manner. He had not asked for it, since he had not been settled in a church. But on the last day of the convention he was in the pulpit with the noted preacher Elhanan Winchester. Winchester, who had come to Universalism from a Baptist background, was noted for his fiery sermons. As he reached the climax of his sermon on this occasion, his message took on the peculiar character usually associated with ordination sermons. He referred to the Scriptures, how they were entrusted to the ordinand. Before Hosea knew what was happening, Winchester, with a flurry of emotion which instantaneously swept the congregation, took up the Bible and pressed it against his breast, with the words, "Brother Ballou, I press to your heart the written Jehovah!" After holding the Bible for a moment against the

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1. Safford, Hosea Ballou, p. 183.

startled young man, Winchester ordered Elder Joab Young: "Brother Young, charge him." This, Young proceeded to do.<sup>1</sup>

No one could claim a more memorable ordination ceremony. Hosea ever after told his friends that he was taken completely by surprise.<sup>2</sup> The action of Winchester demonstrates the respect for Ballou's talents which was prevalent among his colleagues and friends.

The Reverend Hosea Ballou, because he was in such demand as a preacher, decided to give up "keeping school" and to devote himself entirely to the ministry. Since he now and then received money for his efforts, he was encouraged to take this step. He preached nearly every evening to groups which gathered eager to hear the new doctrine of Universalism.<sup>3</sup> His circuit riding took him from Cape Ann on the coast west to the Connecticut River; he travelled as far north as his native Richmond on the border of Massachusetts and New Hampshire and as far south as New London and Hartford.<sup>4</sup> Among his stops was the town of Hardwick in Worcester County, Massachusetts; the contacts he made here were to prove very important a little later. "I preached in meeting-houses when they could be obtained, sometimes in

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1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 106.

2. Hosea Ballou, 2d, "Rev. Hosea Ballou; His Parentage and Early Life," The Universalist Quarterly and General Review, XI (April, 1854), 188.

3. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 59.

4. Ibid., p. 60.

school-houses, sometimes in barns, and not very seldom in groves and orchards, and often in private houses."<sup>1</sup>

It was a strenuous life and it soon began to show on his health. But he would not give it up. To ease the physical strain a bit, he stopped riding horseback and began using a carriage.<sup>2</sup> But he was going through a period of mental strain which could not be eased so simply. The very foundation of his Christian faith was being shaken.

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1. Hosea Ballou, quoted in Ibid.  
2. Ibid.

## CHAPTER V

### "THE ORACLES OF REASON"

On July 2, 1782, the Green Mountain Boy Ethan Allen put the finishing touches on his Reason the Only Oracle of Man.<sup>1</sup> After it was printed two years later, a bolt of lightning struck the print shop, and, of the fifteen hundred copies ready, most of them were consumed in the resulting fire.<sup>2</sup> The story goes that many of the remaining copies were burned by the printer because of its "atheistical" content.

The pious Christians of the day probably considered the bolt of lightning as an act of God. Indeed, with good cause. "Ethan Allen's Bible", as it was called, is a rambling, rollicking, irreverent attack on "priestcraft."

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1. Reason the Only Oracle of Man, or a Compenduous System of Natural Religion. Alternately Adorned with Confutations of a variety of Doctrines Incompatible to It; Deduced from the Most Exalted Ideas Which We are able to Form of the Divine and Human Characters, and from the Universe in General (Bennington, Vermont: 1784). Preface dated July 2, 1782, p. vii. Allen's claim to sole authorship of the work has been challenged. An attempt has been made to demonstrate that most of it was written by Allen's old (dead) friend Dr. Thomas Young (1732-1777). See George Pomeroy Anderson, "Who Wrote 'Ethan Allen's Bible'?", The New England Quarterly, X (December, 1937), 685-696. The topic is further pursued, in a most delightful manner, by Dana Doten, "Ethan Allen's 'Original Something'", The New England Quarterly, XI (June, 1938), 361-366.

2. Anderson, New England Quarterly, X (December, 1937), 696.

Allen minces no words in dissecting and exposing what he considered the many superstitions in Christian belief and practice. And yet Allen's "compenduous system," which is neither compendious nor a system, is genuinely religious. Allen wrote that he did not know what his belief could be called, although his friends had labelled him a Deist. He was, he was sure, "no Christian, except mere infant baptism makes me one...."<sup>1</sup> As his title indicates, Allen substitutes for the Scripture man's reasoning power; he makes it wholly sufficient for man's need. Man's reason cannot plumb the very depths of being, but, then, if it could he would be God. But with the power of reason man cannot but see and worship the Deity in the beauty and wonder of his Creation.<sup>2</sup> Despite his attacks on traditional religion which, to say the least, border on the scurrilous,<sup>3</sup> Allen presents a powerful case for a religion of reason.

It is not known where or when Hosea Ballou got hold of a copy of Allen's book. It may have been passed hand to hand among Universalists because of Allen's universalistic

1. Reason the Only Oracle, p. vii.

2. "The evidence of the being and providence of a God, is so full and compleat, that we cannot miss of discerning it, if we but open our eyes and reflect on the visible creation. The display of God's providence is that by which the evidence of his being is evinced to us...." Ibid., p. 34.

3. E.g., he claims that Moses on Sinai must have seen the "hind parts" of God, since the Bible states that no man can view God's face and live.

outlook. At any rate, from internal evidence in his A Treatise on Atonement there can be no doubt that he read it and was heavily influenced by it. Years later in attempting to trace briefly his change of theological position, Hosea wrote:

I had preached but a short time before my mind was entirely freed from all the perplexities of the doctrine of the trinity, and the common notion of atonement. But in making these advances, as I am disposed to call them, I had the assistance of no author, or writer. As fast as those old doctrines were, by any means, rendered the subjects of inquiry, in my mind, they became exploded. But it would be difficult for me now to recall the particular incidents which suggested queries in my mind respecting them. It may be proper for me here to state one circumstance, which, no doubt, had no small tendency to bring me on to the ground where I have, for many years, felt established. It was my reading of some deistical writings. By this means I was led to see that it was utterly impossible to maintain Christianity as it had been generally believed in the church.<sup>1</sup>

Past writers have apparently shown no inclination to look into the "deistical writings" referred to by Ballou. It is true that Safford speculates<sup>2</sup> that Ballou was referring to Thomas Paine's Age of Reason, but both the date and the contents of Paine<sup>3</sup> militate against this suggestion. As will be noted later, Ballou preached his first "unitarian" sermon in 1795, whereas Paine's book was published but a

1. Letter to Thomas Whittemore, November 25, 1829, in Whittemore, Modern History of Universalism, pp. 436-437n.

2. Hosea Ballou, p. 74.

3. The Age of Reason in The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine, ed. Philip S. Foner. (2 Vols.; New York: Citadel Press, 1945), I, 463-512.

mere year before. Investigation would have shown that Allen's book was the one referred to, but past writers have propagated the myth that Ballou was a completely original thinker and was indebted to no man, but to reason and Holy Writ, for his theological position. That Ballou was a powerful logician cannot be denied; but all men owe great debt to the men of the past and to their contemporaries for much of their thought.

Allen taught Hosea to examine everything by the light of reason. Ballou was an eminently reasonable person, but it is clear that his inherited reverence for the Bible had kept him from questioning it too closely. Hosea did not follow Allen in his rejection of Scripture; he, to the day he died, made exalted claims for its authority. But he did learn from Allen that Reason, too, is a gift from God. As such, it cannot be incompatible with Scripture. Reason must be used by man in order to see what Scripture really says.

Approaching the Bible in this manner, Hosea saw the truth of many of Allen's criticisms of Christian doctrine. Where, for instance, is to be found justification for the dogma of the trinity? Not in the Bible; and not in reason.

We will premise, that the three persons in the supposed Trinity are either finite or infinite; for there cannot in the scale of being be a third sort of beings between the two; for ever so many and exalted degrees in finiteness is still finite, and that being who is infinite admits of no degrees or enlargement; and as all beings whatever must be limited or unlimited, perfect or imperfect, they must therefore be denominated to be finite or infinite: we will

therefore premise the three persons in the Trinity to be merely finite, considered personally and individually from each other, and the question would arise, whether the supposed trinity of finites though united in one essence, could be more than finite still. Inasmuch as three imperfect and circumscribed beings united together, could not constitute a being perfect or infinite, any more than absolute perfection could consist of three imperfections; which would be the same as to suppose that infinity could be made up or compounded of finiteness; or that absolute, uncreated and infinite perfection, could consist of three personal and imperfect natures. But on the other hand, to consider every of the persons in the supposed Trinity, as being absolutely infinite, it would be a downright contradiction to one infinite and all comprehending essence. Admitting that God the father is infinite, it would necessarily preclude the supposed God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost from the god-head, or essence of God; one infinite essence comprehending every power, excellency and perfection, which can possibly exist in the divine nature. Was it possible that three absolute infinities, which is the same as three Gods, could be contained in one and the self-same essence, why not as well any other number of infinities? But as certain as infinity cannot admit of addition, so certain a plurality of infinities cannot exist in the same essence; for real infinity is strict and absolute infinity, and only that, and cannot be compounded of infinities or of parts, but forecloses all addition. A personal or circumscribed God, implies as great and manifest contradiction as the mind of man can conceive of; it is the same as a limited [sic] omnipresence, a weak Almighty, or a finite God.<sup>1</sup>

Such a common sense approach probably had the force of demonstration in Hosea's mind. This exploding of the doctrine of the trinity naturally raised the problem of the position of Jesus Christ in the scheme of things. Allen amasses Biblical texts to show that Jesus was a finite human who did not claim divinity and attributed to God knowledge that he did

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1. Allen, Reason the Only Oracle, pp. 344-346.

not himself possess.<sup>1</sup> This was probably Hosea's first introduction to unitarian thought. It is easy to imagine the eagerness with which he checked Allen's references against his own Bible.

The elimination of the trinity and the reducing of Christ to human status had serious implications, as Hosea could see. What happens in such a scheme to the orthodox theory of Christ's atonement and the imputation of his righteousness to sinful man? In Allen's thought there is no necessity for atonement. In quaint terms he examines the Biblical story of the sin of Adam and Eve in eating the forbidden fruit and dismisses it as ridiculous.

...It is observable, that there are no travellers or historians, who have given any accounts of such a tree, or of the cherubims or flaming sword, which renders its existence disputable, and the reality of it doubtful and improbable; the more so, as that part of the country, in which it is said to have been planted, has for a long succession of ages been populously inhabited.<sup>2</sup>

Having shown that there was no such fruit, and, therefore, no such thing as original sin, Ethan Allen proceeds to the conclusion that there was no necessity for atonement. But he bases this more on the nature of God than on the falseness of the story of the Garden. God is unchangeable; eternal justice and reason can never be altered. Therefore, God

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1. Ibid.; pp. 352ff.  
2. Ibid., p. 363.

needs not the satisfaction of a sacrifice of an infinite Mediator.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Allen denied that it was possible for man to commit a sin of such magnitude as to require such services on the part of Christ. For, sin in his system is not infinite but finite. No amount of sin by finite man can possibly equal infinite sin.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, if sin were infinite, all degrees of it would be so, and it would be no more sinful to kill a man as it would be to kill his horse!<sup>3</sup>

Allen did not mean to minimize the seriousness of sin in human life. He recognized the blight it casts on human affairs. Sin exists because man deviates from the "unerring order and reason, which is moral rectitude in the abstract...."<sup>4</sup> This rectitude is not to be had by man overnight, for man gains his knowledge through his senses.<sup>5</sup> Just as with the sciences, so with morality. It is acquired progressively through reason and experience. This might be called the revelation of God "which he has revealed to us in the constitution of our rational natures...."<sup>6</sup> It follows, then, that sin is a misunderstanding of what is right for man. Sin, or virtue, is thus found in the intention or motive of an individual rather than in the end result of his action.<sup>7</sup>

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1. Allen, Reason the Only Oracle, p. 405.

2. Ibid., p. 112.

3. Ibid., p. 111.

4. Ibid., p. 112.

5. Ibid., pp. 142ff.

6. Ibid., p. 466.

7. Ibid., p. 334.

But God overcomes the sins of men, using suffering as a tool. He convinces them in this way that "sin and vanity are their greatest enemies...." He shows them that true happiness is to be found in God and "moral rectitude." By reclaiming men in this manner he gives them occasion "to glorify God for the wisdom and goodness of his government, and to be ultimately happy under it."<sup>1</sup> For this reason eternal punishment is not only unnecessary but would defeat the very purpose of punishment which is to reclaim the wrongdoer.<sup>2</sup> This thought provides Allen with an opportunity to condemn those Calvinists who claim that the eternal demnation of some of mankind is necessary for the happiness of the Elect. Such reasoning is "horrible" and places God in the same class with "the detestable despots of this world."<sup>3</sup> This universalist note was bound to please Hosea.

Allen's "Oracles of Reason," as he subtitled his work, forced Hosea thoroughly to reexamine his theological position. The effect of this book on his thought was much greater than the major arguments listed above would indicate. Only a detailed comparison of Allen's book with Hosea's Treatise on Atonement which appeared in 1805 can convince the reader of the extent of the latter's indebtedness,<sup>4</sup> both in style and

1. Ibid., p. 118.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., pp. 118-119.

4. This indebtedness will further be pointed out below in the chapter dealing with Ballou's work.

content.

That Hosea was not converted to Deism by "Ethan Allen's Bible" demonstrates that he was capable of standing his ground on point of doctrine. He learned from Allen, but he was not conquered. As stated above, he retained his reverence for Scripture all his life; but now it was Scripture interpreted by Reason. This is not to say that this experience was not trying to his soul. That he was shaken seriously and found it necessary to call for divine guidance is clear from his correspondence on the subject of revelation with Abner Kneeland in 1816.<sup>1</sup> Kneeland was being plagued by doubts concerning the authenticity of the Scripture, doubts brought on by his reading of the works of Deists such as Tom Paine. For such doubts, Hosea proposed the cure that he himself had used:

If you are troubled with unbelief, if this plague have entered your heart, permit me to suggest a remedy. Humility is the first step, sincere piety towards God the second, let these be followed by that for which the Bereans [2] were commended and the deadly virus of unbelief will soon be purged. Will you say; "physician heal thyself?" I reply, I think I have found relief by the use of the prescription, and am so much in favour of it, that I am determined to continue its application myself as well as recommend it to others.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Hosea Ballou, A Series of Letters in Defence of Divine Revelation; in Reply to Rev. Abner Kneeland's Serious Inquiry into the Authenticity of the same. To which is added a Religious Correspondence between the Rev. Hosea Ballou and the Rev. Dr. Joseph Buckminster and Rev. Joseph Walton, Pastors of Congregational Churches in Portsmouth, N. H. (Boston: 1820).

2. Acts 17:11

3. H. Ballou, Letters in Defence of Revelation, p. 25.

That Hosea was referring to his experience with the writing of Ethan Allen is a fair surmise.

Hosea always spoke highly of the Deists, believing that they were a healthy challenge to religionists. Their doubts forced the thoughtful person to examine his beliefs. In his correspondence with Kneeland he was to say that anathematizing Christians have done more harm to the religion of Jesus "than his open enemies from Celsus to T. Paine."<sup>1</sup>

Hosea now began the job of theological reconstruction. Not only did he adopt, more or less, the views of Ethan Allen outlined above,<sup>2</sup> but there were other influences on him at this time. In 1784 the minister of the First Church in Boston had come out for universal salvation. Charles Chauncy, being a most discrete man, had published his book The Salvation of All Men<sup>3</sup> anonymously. That Hosea Ballou was familiar with the book as early as 1797 is demonstrated by the fact that reference is made to it in his correspondence

1. Ibid., p. 111. See also his laudatory comments in Strictures on a Sermon entitled "Religion a Social Principle;" delivered in the Church in Federal Street, Boston, Dec. 10, by William Ellery Channing (Boston: 1820), pp. 12-14.

2. It should be stressed that many of Allen's views he did not accept; these have not been included in this work.

3. Full title: The Mystery Hid from Ages and Generations, Made Manifest by the Gospel-Revelation: or, The Salvation of All Men the Grand Thing aimed at in the Scheme of God, as opened in the New-Testament Writings, and entrusted with Jesus Christ to bring into Effect (London, 1784).

with Joel Foster.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to believe that such a forthright statement of Universalism on the part of one of the leading figures in the New England church would not have been widely circulated among Universalists. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that Ballou knew the book several years before his correspondence with Foster.

Chauncy's book, of course, supplied Hosea with many arguments in favor of Universalism. Chauncy, with great display of exegetical skill, attempts to demonstrate that the Greek terms for "eternity," "eternal," "everlasting" ( αἰών, αἰώνιος ) may signify in the New Testament a limited period of time, thus cutting the ground out from under the orthodox argument that Jesus and the early Christians believed in eternal misery in another life.<sup>2</sup> He sees these terms as having the meaning of "age" or "dispensation" as opposed to the ideas expressed by the English translation. These arguments were very popular with the Universalists and widely used by them. But where Chauncy expressed a cautious hope that these words can be interpreted thus, the Universalists proclaimed the certainty of it.

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1. Joel Foster and Hosea Ballou, A Literary Correspondence between Joel Foster, A. M., Minister of the Congregational Society in New-Salem, and Hosea Ballou, an Itinerant Preacher of the Sect called Universalists. In which the Question concerning Future Punishment, and the Reasons for and against it, are considered (Northampton: 1799), p. 62.

2. Chauncy, Salvation of All Men, pp. 260ff.

Hosea was confirmed by Chauncy in his opinion that the texts of Scripture must be interpreted in the light of their context. For this technique Chauncy was, in turn, indebted to the English liberal scholar, John Taylor of Norwich.<sup>1</sup>

Like Ethan Allen, Chauncy stressed that sin is not an infinite evil, but the erring of the finite creature: "It is the fault of a finite creature, and the effect of finite principles, passions, and appetites."<sup>2</sup> He also stressed the idea that God, as a loving Father, uses punishment for correction. It is not reasonable to believe that God will torment men eternally "without any intention to do them the least imaginable good, as must be the case, if the doctrine of never-ending misery is true...."<sup>3</sup> It was Chauncy's opinion that in a future state of punishment none could be saved, but in a future state of discipline, salvation is possible.<sup>4</sup>

Chauncy sets forth a proposition that was forever after a part of Ballou's thought: sin equals misery. An intelligent and moral agent cannot be happy in sin. Only in the exercise of intellectual and moral powers can man be happy. It is in the very nature of things that this be true.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid.; pp. xiff; 242.
  2. Ibid.; pp. 319-320.
  3. Ibid.; p. 327.
  4. Ibid.; pp. 11, 322.
  5. Ibid.; p. 11.

This idea was responsible for Ballou's eventual position that if there is to be misery in a future state of existence then sin must exist in that state.

If Ethan Allen tended to weaken Hosea's faith in Christ as Mediator, Chauncy tended to strengthen it. Allen's position was out-and-out unitarian, whereas Chauncy's position was a high Arianism. Of course, he did not use the term "Arian" and did not attack the trinity. Chauncy held that Christ would win all men to himself in this state or in a series of future states. Christ would then deliver up his kingdom to the Father so that God would be all in all.<sup>1</sup>

In discussing the atonement, Chauncy is as interesting for what he does not say as for what he does. He nowhere states that God had to be reconciled to men. He stresses, rather, that God reconciled man to himself through the agency of Christ.<sup>2</sup> When Hosea Ballou finally hammered out his position on atonement this was to be at its core.

One of the most interesting elements in Hosea Ballou's theological thought is his rigid determinism. Never in his life, he claimed time and again, was he tempted to take an Arminian position. The question inevitably arises, "Was his

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1. Chauncy, Salvation of All Men, pp. 170-237.

2. Ibid., pp. 127ff.

determinism a carry-over from his Calvinistic upbringing?"

About the year 1770 Ferdinand Olivier Petitpierre was expelled as minister of the church at Chaux-de-Fonds in the Canton of Neuchâtel, Switzerland, for forthrightly preaching the doctrine of universal salvation. In 1786 he published his views in Thoughts on the Divine Goodness<sup>1</sup> in Amsterdam. An English translation first appeared in 1788.<sup>2</sup> Various American editions appeared not many years later. Hosea Ballou could have had access in these years to the edition brought out at Hartford in 1794 or the one published at Walpole, New Hampshire, in 1801.<sup>3</sup> That Hosea was familiar with the book is clear from both external and internal evidence. Nathaniel Stacy pursued his theological studies under Hosea's guidance in 1802.<sup>4</sup> He lists the few Universalist books in his teacher's library at the time and Petitpierre is among them.

Stronger than this external evidence of Ballou's acquaint-

1. Le Plan de Dieu envers les Hommes, tel qu'il las manifeste dans la Nature et dans la Grace; Thoughts on the Divine Goodness, Relative to the Government of Moral Agents, Particularly Displayed in Future Rewards and Punishments. Preface by Thomas J. Sawyer (Philadelphia: 1843).

2. Ibid., p. 4.

3. For these and other editions see "Bibliography" in Eddy, History of Universalism, II, 490.

4. Nathaniel Stacy, Memoirs of the Life of Nathaniel Stacy, Preacher of the Gospel of Universal Grace (Columbus, Pennsylvania: 1850), p. 71.

tance with Thoughts on the Divine Goodness is the internal evidence of A Treatise on Atonement. By the time he published this book in 1805 he was thoroughly imbued with Petitpierre's thought. There are reminiscences of Petitpierre in his treatment of the benevolence of God and His unbounded love for His creatures. Petitpierre appears to have been heavily influenced by Leibnitzian optimism regarding this best of all possible worlds. Hosea Ballou may have been optimistic by nature, but the terms in which he expressed this optimism were very similar to those used by the Swiss. Petitpierre taught Hosea that the Deity is responsible for every happening in the universe; nothing escapes His direction in space and time and eternity. Everything that happens to man is the work of God, "nor can any event that may concern me hereafter, in time or in eternity, ever take place, without the concurrence of the first cause."<sup>1</sup>

It was Petitpierre who led Hosea to see that "second causes" (i.e. men) are instruments in the hands of God. The Father works through men; "every thing ultimately proceeds from the first cause...."<sup>2</sup> Therefore, God is responsible for sin. Man may think that he is responsible for evil, but God uses man's sin for a good end. Men "are

1. On Divine Goodness, p. 39.  
 2. Ibid., p. 38.

the ignorant and undesigning instruments, by which the first cause executes the purposes of his eternal counsels."<sup>1</sup> What appears evil--and Petitpierre did not minimize the fact that evil is real to man--is used by the Deity to prepare man for immortality. Thus, what seems evil is--in a connected view--good for man. "...Whatever the sinner intends as evil, the Divine Ruler of events means unto good."<sup>2</sup> So the trial and death of Christ, the malignity of the brothers towards Joseph, and the folly of the prodigal son, were all designed for good by God.<sup>3</sup> Hosea was extremely fond of all of these examples and used them, especially the Joseph story, throughout life to justify his determinism. But his was a happy determinism.. He had supreme confidence that God was in complete control of things and had the good of his children always in view. This was at the heart of his Universalism: if all men are to be saved, there can be no free will. He would not admit of any possibility in which the divine will could be thwarted.

Common to Allen, Chauncy, and Petitpierre is the insistence that God is supremely interested in the lives of men. It is His intention to "happify" His children when-

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1. Ibid.  
 2. Ibid., pp. 39-41.  
 3. Ibid., pp. 38-39.

ever possible. This attitude made for a man-centered religion. Far from being willing to be damned for the "glory of God," these children of the Enlightenment insisted that God glorifies Himself by making His children happy.

These were the elements which went into Hosea Ballou's reconstructed theology. The process began in the early 1790's and, except for minor changes during later life, was complete with the publication of the Treatise on Atonement in 1805. The steps cannot be traced exactly, but it is known that he was proclaiming his unitarian views by 1795.<sup>1</sup> Edward Turner, soon to be a close friend, heard Hosea at Sturbridge argue against the doctrine of vicarious atonement on unitarian grounds.<sup>2</sup> But this change of theology did not go unchallenged. There was bound to be opposition on the part of his colleagues in the ministry.

Opposition appears to have manifested itself at the General Convention of 1796 at Winchester, New Hampshire. The venerable Zebulon Streeter as moderator had the task of

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1. Edward Turner, "Changes in the Religious Views of Universalists," The Universalist Quarterly and General Review, VI (January, 1849), 14.

2. Hosea Ballou, 2d, "Rise and Prevalence of Unitarian Views among the Universalists," The Universalist Quarterly and General Review, V (October, 1848), 374.

writing the circular after the convention closed. His words reflect contention in the ranks:

It is true that different professors of the Abrahamic faith have dissimilar views concerning the modes in which so great a salvation will be individually made known to the purchased possession; but we collectively and separately, seriously, affectionately, meekly entreat our brethren that they would not give themselves over to vain disputations on the manner in which Jehovah worketh the counsel of his will; rather rest ye contented that God, who hath promised, is faithful to perform; and cheerfully receive all those who are blessed with gifts of edification, however diverse their gifts may be, preferring no one man above his fellow-man, and rendering honor to none, save unto Jesus Christ, the only Holy and the only Reverend.<sup>1</sup>

Hosea said later that he had as much trouble persuading his Universalist elders of "the errors of Calvinistic tenets" as he had persuading the orthodox of the truth of Universal salvation.<sup>2</sup> But Hosea was a powerful and persuasive arguer and by the time ten years had passed, the "reform" was complete—with certain exceptions. The patriarch John Murray and Edward Mitchell in New York remained "strenuous" trinitarians and Calvinists till the day they died. But, except for rare cases over the years, Universalist preachers have been unitarians.<sup>3</sup>

1. Quoted by Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 119.

2. Hosea Ballou in The Trumpet and Universalist Magazine, XVI, 116; quoted by Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 118.

3. Hosea Ballou, 2d, "Dogmatic and Religious History of Universalism in America," The Universalist Quarterly and General Review, V (October, 1848), 102.

## CHAPTER VI

### RUTH

Among Hosea Ballou's stops on his circuit after he began preaching in 1791, was the section of the town of Hardwick, Massachusetts, which was soon to become the independent town of Dana.<sup>1</sup> By 1794 there were enough believers to begin holding regular services. The Baptist church granted use of its meetinghouse.<sup>2</sup> Hosea was invited to "settle" as minister of the group. Since they could not afford to pay him for full time, it was agreed that he could be free to supply other societies.<sup>3</sup> On the Sabbaths he preached in Dana once a month, he received five dollars.<sup>4</sup> His circuit riding in this period took him north into Vermont and east as far as Cape Ann to the church at Gloucester left vacant by John Murray who had moved to Boston.<sup>5</sup> In addition to his

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1. Dana was incorporated in 1801 and was made up of land from Greenwich, Petersham, and Hardwick. In 1926-27 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts voted to inundate Dana and much of the area surrounding as part of the Quabbin Reservoir. Roland D. Sawyer, "Where the Universalist Denomination was Born," The Christian Leader, CXXVII (August 4, 1945), 346-347.

2. Inventory of Universalist Archives in Massachusetts (Boston: The Historical Records Survey, Division of Community Service Programs, Work Projects Administration, 1942), p. 175.

3. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 64.

4. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 121.

5. Ibid., I, 156.

travelling he found it necessary to till a plot of ground and to "keep" school in order to eke out a living.<sup>1</sup> Despite this varied activity, he devoted much time to study and to the job of systematizing his theological thought. Like Emerson and Thoreau later, he found much intellectual stimulation by walking in the woods.<sup>2</sup>

Hosea was now twenty-four and his friends began to think it time that he settle down with a wife. He made a fine appearance with his straight six foot height and his firm build of two hundred pounds.<sup>3</sup> And those who got to know him found an "urbanity and pleasantness" about his manner.<sup>4</sup> Caleb Rich was obviously thinking along these lines, for in the late summer or fall of 1795 he proposed to Hosea that he come along and meet a certain young lady by the name of Ruth Washburn. Ruth was the daughter of Stephen and Sarah Washburn who were among the first in the town of Williamsburg to have the courage to declare their acceptance of the doctrine of Universal salvation.<sup>5</sup>

So it was that Caleb Rich and Hosea rode out to Williamsburg one day. Ruth, who no doubt had been led to expect a visit, was looking from the window as Caleb Rich

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1. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 64.

2. Ibid., p. 68.

3. Safford, Hosea Ballou, p. 59.

4. Stacy, Memoirs, p. 57.

5. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, III, 226.

approached the house with the tall young man at his side. As she saw Hosea for the first time her heart told her, "There comes my future companion."<sup>1</sup> Hosea was impressed with this tall, graceful young lady of seventeen.<sup>2</sup> Her complexion was clear, her eyes blue, and she had flowing light brown hair.<sup>3</sup> So he "came a courting" for the following year and asked her to be his wife.

Hosea and Ruth were married September 15, 1796.<sup>4</sup> They lived with her family for the first few months of wedded happiness. Then on a cold winter's day they climbed into a sleigh and rode off to their new home in Dana.<sup>5</sup> So began the companionship which lasted for almost fifty-five years. Ruth was a devoted wife during these many years, always concerned with his comfort, always interested in his work. She was ever sure that Hosea knew what was best and put complete faith in his judgment.<sup>6</sup>

Shortly after their marriage, news arrived from Guilford, Vermont, of the birth of a son to Asahel Ballou.<sup>7</sup> Asahel was

1. As later told to Thomas Whittemore. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 120.

2. Born September 17, 1778. A. Ballou, The Ballous in America, p. 131.

3. Safford, Hosea Ballou, p. 220.

4. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 198.

5. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, p. 120.

6. Hosea Ballou, 2d, "Rev. Hosea Ballou; his Parentage and Early Life," The Universalist Quarterly and General Review, XI (April, 1854), 190.

7. Born October 18, 1796. H. S. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, 2d, p. 5.

the son of Hosea's oldest brother, Benjamin, and he and Hosea, being the same age, were the closest of friends. Asahel named his first child after the uncle who seemed more like a brother to him--Hosea Ballou. Hosea, 2d, was always to be equally close to his grand uncle.

Early in 1797 Hosea made a journey which lingered long in his memory. He travelled to Hartford to visit his friend Elhanan Winchester who, at the age of forty-six, was slowly dying from a disease which baffled his doctors.<sup>1</sup> Hosea spent a week with Winchester mostly exchanging views on doctrine. They discovered that they were far apart on many matters, which is understandable considering Hosea's new-found unitarianism. But, in the spirit of true friendship, they agreed to disagree. Hosea was forever after happy that he had made this visit, for on April 18 Elhanan Winchester died.<sup>2</sup>

When October rolled around Hosea thought it best to stay as close to home as possible for Ruth was expecting their first child. This allowed him an excellent opportunity to begin a correspondence with a scholar about whom he had heard much. Joel Foster was minister of the Congregational church

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1. Eddy, History of Universalism, I, 479.

2. Hosea Ballou in The Universalist Magazine, II (June 9, 1821), 198.

at New-Salem and was well established in the area, having been there for eighteen years.<sup>1</sup> Hosea first addressed Foster on October 4th, stating that, being young, he was in need of assistance.<sup>2</sup> But it is fairly obvious that Hosea was seeking to engage Foster in controversy, for among the questions he asked Foster in his letter was this: "...Do the scriptures teach us that God intended the eternal misery of any of the human kind, or to glorify himself in their endless wretchedness."<sup>3</sup> It is difficult to believe that Hosea, for many years a convinced Universalist, could ask this question expecting to be enlightened by the answer. Foster returned a courteous letter on October 9 accepting the invitation to discuss Hosea's proposed questions. It is obvious from his tone that he was a liberal for he replied that it may be possible that someplace in the "divine economy" there may be a provision for the restoration of all creatures and that he would not have an aversion to that belief if it could be shown to be scriptural. He has his doubts, however, about the effect of such a belief on the average individual. To tell people in this life that they eventually will be saved

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1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, 127.

2. Joel Foster and Hosea Ballou, A Literary Correspondence, between Joel Foster, A. M., Minister of the Congregational Society in New-Salem, and Hosea Ballou, an Itinerant Preacher of the Sect called Universalists. In which the Question concerning Future Punishment, and the Reasons for and against it, are considered (Northampton: 1799), p. 6.

3. Ibid.

can "only abate their awe and dread of divine punishment, which in all probability would be no great service to them."<sup>1</sup>

Hosea did not have the leisure to reply to Foster until early in November, for family matters kept him occupied for several weeks. On October 13, 1797, Ruth Ballou gave birth to her first child. It was a girl. The happy parents named her Fanny.<sup>2</sup>

The correspondence with Foster is interesting at this date primarily for the light it sheds on the evolution of Hosea's thought. Here is the first glimpse of the Biblical interpretation which is to play so prominent a part in the Notes on the Parables and A Treatise on Atonement. Under the influence of Chauncy,<sup>3</sup> he distinguishes between "the Law Dispensation"<sup>4</sup> of the Old Testament and the "gospel dispensation" of the New.<sup>5</sup> Such passages as II Thessalonians 1:3-10 which picture Christ as coming from heaven with fire should not be interpreted to refer to future punishment, but should be interpreted to mean the coming of Jesus in the spirit of the gospel, "for this flaming fire must be of an heavenly nature, or Christ and his angels would not be found in it."<sup>6</sup>

1. Ibid., p. 12.

2. Statistics from A. Ballou, The Ballous in America, p. 131.

3. That Foster is aware of Ballou's indebtedness to Chauncy is obvious. See A Literary Correspondence, p. 62.

4. Ibid., p. 19.

5. Ibid., p. 20.

6. Ibid., p. 23.

"...The presence of the Lord destroys all sin and false conceptions...."<sup>1</sup> In other words, Christ's gospel purifies human nature of its sins and corruptions and man's heavenly nature stands revealed. This idea is to be fully elaborated in the Notes and the Treatise.

Among the other subjects covered in this correspondence is the problem of free will, Hosea on grounds of reason holding to a system of "strict fatality," although at this point he is not sure that it can be reconciled with all parts of the Bible.<sup>2</sup> This may indicate that he was already familiar with Petitpierre.

This correspondence is also enlightening in respect to Ballou's position on the question of punishment in a future life. He appears to be wavering on this point. In answer to Foster's question, "Do you believe in any punishment at all after this life?",<sup>3</sup> Ballou gives a blunt "No."<sup>4</sup> But he then changes his position. He explains that he answered in this manner because his mind was not made up on the point. But, "I am now satisfied in the idea of a future state of discipline, in which the impenitent will be miserable."<sup>5</sup> Again he appears to follow Chauncy in this matter; it is a state of future discipline from which a soul can be saved, not a state of penalty.

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1. Ibid., p. 24.
  2. Ibid., p. 56.
  3. Ibid., p. 36.
  4. Ibid., p. 41.
  5. Ibid., pp. 55-56.

Against the will of Hosea, Joel Foster published the correspondence as a warning to Christians of the importance of "keeping upon the plain ground of Scripture," and the danger of "indulging an unbounded liberty in qualifying the sense of Scripture by their own prejudices, contrary to the common use of language, and in support of doctrines which are not according to godliness."<sup>1</sup> It appears that Hosea had indicated a willingness to publish when he met Foster for the first time in July of 1798 on the road to Orange.<sup>2</sup> But it seems that he later thought it over and wrote Foster that he had expressed some ideas for the sake of argument to which he would not want to be held.<sup>3</sup> But Foster had already corrected Hosea's spelling and punctuation (as Hosea had requested) and turned most of the correspondence over to the printer who had already begun setting the type.<sup>4</sup> Thus Hosea's reluctance was "both unexpected and out of season."<sup>5</sup> So Hosea Ballou's first appearance in print was not all together auspicious.

Barely had Hosea finished his year-long controversy with Foster than he began a preaching engagement in Boston. In October of 1798 he had received a letter from John Murray

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1. Ibid., p. 3.
  2. Ibid., p. 58.
  3. Ibid., p. 56.
  4. Ibid., p. 61.
  5. Ibid., pp. 60-61.

which is included in full for the picture it gives of the relationship of the two men:

MY DEAR BROTHER,- You are sensible, I presume, that some time past you delivered in this town some matters not quite pleasing to me. I cannot act a hypocritical part, and appear what I am not; I have since, however, not only heard you deliver the truth, but have been much delighted by the account I have heard from Gloucester of your labors there. You will see by what follows I am sincere in my commendations as in my cen-sures; and as I expressed my dislike when I felt it, I am now going to give you full evidence of my hearty approbation and my readiness to promote your interest. I am going for a few weeks to the southward. I have recommended you to my friends to supply my place. I have spoken of you in such a manner as is pleasing to them. I wish sincerely you may come unto them directly, and I wait only your answer to set out. I cannot say how long I shall be absent; I contemplate five or six weeks. Were I a single man I would leave my whole support with you as a compensation for your time; but as I leave two-thirds of me behind, I shall give about half of my promised support. I am willing to allow you ten dollars a Sunday while I am absent. Your living will cost you nothing; you may visit the adjacent parts of the country in the vicinity of Boston all the week if you choose it, or visit the friends in this town, where you will be sure of a welcome. You will preach to many strangers here, and be by this means more abundantly known; and, I presume, if you fare no better than I do when I journey, you will gain more towards the support of your family here for the time you continue here, than you would for the same time anywhere else; so that in every point of view it will be your interest to come here. Should you have made other engagements you can plead the necessity of attending on the present occasion as a mere temporary matter, which may not occur again, and that some time back you encouraged your friends in this town to believe you would supply them should they stand in need of you. You will have the goodness to write directly to let us know what we have to depend upon, and if you cannot come send Mr. Coffin or Mr. Lathe. I should hope, however, that you will be able and willing to come yourself; and should you come, Mrs. Murray, who had the pleasure of hearing you sundry times in Gloucester much to her satisfaction, will be glad to see you at her habitation as often as possible.

I hope the presence of the Saviour will be with you, warming your heart and the hearts of your hearers; and should I ever return I trust we shall rejoice together in this hope. I remain,

Your affectionate and devoted servant,  
JOHN MURRAY<sup>1</sup>

Hosea preached at Murray's First Universalist Society on Hanover Street for ten weeks. All appears to have gone very well until an unfortunate incident marred the engagement. On the afternoon of the last Sunday Hosea chose for a text:

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.<sup>2</sup>

Hosea interpreted the "Son" in this passage to be Christ. Thus the Son is subject and subordinate to the Father and one day the Son shall relinquish all power to the Father "that God may be all in all." Mrs. Judith Murray, "a most uneasy spirit," was present at the service. She interpreted the "Son" in the text to be the "Son of perdition," that is, the devil, and believed that God would finally subdue him and take control of the kingdom. On this point, as is obvious, the trinitarian and unitarian positions were at odds. As Hosea concluded his sermon and was giving the final prayer, Mrs. Murray sent a message to Jonathan Balch in the choir. Just as Hosea ended his prayer and was about to announce the hymn, Balch arose in the choir loft and announced to the congrega-

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1. Quoted by Eddy, History of Universalism, I, 506-507.  
2. I Cor. 15:26-28.

tion: "I wish to give notice that the doctrine which has been preached here this afternoon is not the doctrine which is usually preached in this house." Hosea listened attentively to the announcement and then said simply, "The audience will please take notice of what our brother has said." He then proceeded to read the hymn.<sup>1</sup>

The congregation, as may well be imagined, was extremely upset by this act of rudeness to the preacher. A parish committee meeting was held immediately after the service to discuss the incident. That evening the committee, along with some of the leading members of the congregation, apologized to Hosea for the insult.<sup>2</sup>

This effort of Mrs. Murray to save the reputation of the First Universalist Society probably did not help relations between John Murray and Hosea Ballou. Murray, who tended to be somewhat intolerant of any views not his own, was not happy with Hosea's unitarianism. But, as is obvious from his invitation to Hosea to fill his pulpit in Boston, he was not unalterably opposed to him. He probably thought that Ballou was capable of learning. On a visit to Murray's home in Boston Hosea and the patriarch fell into conversation centering about the parable of the sheep and the goats in

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1. The Trumpet and Universalist Magazine, XX (March 4, 1848), 150; Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 147-148.

2. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 148.

Matthew 25. It was Hosea's belief that the sheep represented believers in Christ while the goats stood for unbelievers. Murray attempted to give Hosea the true interpretation. Murray believed that the sheep were the human race and that the goats represented the devils who would go into everlasting punishment. Hosea listened patiently as Murray set forth his exegesis of the passage. When he had finished he said quietly and in an inquiring manner, "Father Murray, those who were on the left hand of the throne were accused of not having visited the sick. Do you think that it is so desirable a thing to have the devils visit the sick, that they will be condemned to everlasting punishment for having neglected that duty?"<sup>1</sup>

Hosea's ten-week engagement in Boston made for him many friends. A great number had heard him for the first time and were very much impressed. Several of them conceived the idea of starting a new society and inviting Hosea to take the pulpit. When he was approached, however, he kindly but firmly refused. "I cannot," he answered, "do anything to injure Brother Murray, nor the beloved society to which he ministers!" And he requested that no more be said on the subject.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., I, 160-161.

2. Ibid., I, 162.

Ruth gave birth to their second child in April of 1799.<sup>1</sup> This time it was a boy. They named him after his father, adding the middle name "Faxon."

The General Convention was held at Woodstock, Vermont, that September and Hosea was honored by being elected to the moderator's chair.<sup>2</sup> But the convention did not proceed without incident. The Universalists had applied for and been granted the use of the courthouse for their gathering. But the sheriff of the county was not happy with the arrangement. No Universalists were to be allowed to congregate in Woodstock! He planted himself, sword drawn, in front of the courthouse door determined to keep out any so depraved as to believe in Universal salvation. When it came time for the session of the convention to begin, the Universalists with moderator Ballou at their head gathered down the road and proceeded deliberately to the courthouse. As they arrived at the front door Hosea, with his customary self-possession, looked the sheriff in the eye and said, "Peter, put up thy sword into his place." The sheriff, stunned, lowered the sword, and allowed the Universalists to enter.<sup>3</sup>

The Universalists of the Woodstock area were obviously impressed with Hosea's aggressive leadership. Soon after the General Convention, Woodstock and Barnard were added to

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1. April 4, 1799. A. Ballou, The Ballous in America, p. 131.

2. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 149.

3. Stacy, Memoirs, p. 57.

his circuit.<sup>1</sup> And it was not long after that he was invited to make that area his home.

Present at this Woodstock conference was the young man who was to become Ballou's first theological student. Nathaniel Stacy provides the earliest information available regarding Hosea's attitude toward theological education. Stacy began his study with Hosea in October, 1802.<sup>2</sup> When Hosea, whose circuit now stretched from Barnard, Vermont, to Gloucester, filled the pulpit in Dana once a month, Nathaniel Stacy listened eagerly. Nathaniel had first hand experience with Hosea while he served as the assistant in the general store in Dana. Hosea was well-liked by those who knew him; his "social, affable habits made him an agreeable companion for all with whom he associated, both young and old...."<sup>3</sup> Hosea kept an eye on Stacy and obviously thought he had the makings of a preacher. Stacy, who was very self-effacing and doubtful of his own ability, was very surprised when Hosea walked into the shop of the clock maker (where Stacy was now an apprentice) and encouraged him to study for the ministry.<sup>4</sup>

Stacy found that the resources of Hosea's study were

1. Henry Swan Dana, History of Woodstock, Vermont (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1889), p. 399.

2. Stacy, Memoirs, p. 71.

3. Ibid., p. 62.

4. Ibid., pp. 67-68.

very meager. His library had very few books; the only Universalist works were Elhanan Winchester's Dialogues<sup>1</sup> and Lectures,<sup>2</sup> Petitpierre's On Divine Goodness, and Relly's Union. Stacy's main text was the Bible, with Hosea as his commentator.<sup>3</sup>

Soon after Stacy started his study, Hosea's circuit no longer ran from Vermont to Gloucester but was restricted to towns within Worcester county. This made it possible for the young man to accompany his master--conversing and asking questions, and listening to him preach at the various stops.<sup>4</sup>

Hosea obviously believed that one learns by doing; or, so it would appear from the experience of the various young men who studied theology with him over the years. Long before they thought they were ready, through Hosea's efforts they found themselves in the pulpit. One Sunday morning in November of 1802 when Hosea was to preach in Dana he came to

1. The Universal Restoration: Exhibited in Four Dialogues between a Minister and his Friend; comprehending the Substance of Several Real Conversations which the Author had with Various Persons both in America and Europe on that Interesting Subject: Chiefly Designed fully to State, and fairly to Answer the most common Objections that are brought against it, from the Scriptures (Philadelphia: 1843). [First edition, 1792].

2. A Course of Lectures on the Prophecies that remain to be Fulfilled. Delivered in the Borough of Southwark--as also at the Chapel in Glass House Yard, in the Years, 1788, '9, '90 (2 Volumes; London: 1790-1791). [American edition, Walpole, New Hampshire: 1800.]

3. Stacy, Memoirs, p. 69.

4. Ibid., P. 70.

Stacy with his hand on his head, complaining of a violent headache and saying that he could not possibly preach. Would Nathaniel fill in for him? Stacy protested that the sermons he had been writing were all at home, but, after much protest, he agreed to preach his first sermon as a substitute for Hosea. But he was not at all confident of success: "...Belshazzar's knees could never smite together more violently, when he saw the hand-writing upon the wall, than did mine when I arose to address the congregation!" But, despite his extreme nervousness, he preached a fairly acceptable sermon. The service over, Stacy heard no more about Hosea's headache. As a matter of fact, Hosea "preached like an apostle" at the afternoon service. Stacy never could get him to admit or deny that he had feigned his headache.<sup>1</sup>

Two more children were born to the Ballous during their stay in Dana. Massena Berthier Ballou was born in November of 1800.<sup>2</sup> His interesting name was due to the admiration that Hosea had for two of Napoleon's marshals.<sup>3</sup> This was the first of several of the Ballou children who were to be graced with uncommon appellations due, it is speculated, to a poetic foible in their father's nature. Their fourth child,

1. Ibid., pp. 71-73.

2. November 28, 1800. A Ballou, The Ballous in America.  
p. 131.

3. Massena B. Ballou, quoted by Safford, Hosea Ballou,  
p. 205.

born in Dana in January of 1803,<sup>1</sup> was christened Cassandana!

The Ballou children had little more than their interesting names in these years. As had been true with their father when he was a child they went without many of the graces of a comfortable existence so that the work of the Lord could be accomplished. Five dollars per Sunday-- at least when he preached in Dana--and whatever could be earned by farming and teaching school was the little there was to live on. It may have been the financial burden of a growing family which persuaded Hosea to accept a call from the north. A month after Cassandana was born Hosea moved his family to Vermont.

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1. January 9, 1803. A Ballou, The Ballous in America, p. 131.

## CHAPTER VII

### "THE SISTER SOCIETIES"

Five groups of Universalists united in the Woodstock, Vermont, area to call Hosea Ballou as their minister early in 1803. These "Sister Societies" were made up of the towns of Barnard, Woodstock, Hartland, Bethel, with Bridgewater being added to the group a little later. The earliest of these groups was probably at Woodstock. The first definite traces of Universalism are found there in the 1780's, with the first attempt at organization in about 1786.<sup>1</sup> At Barnard Universalist dissenters were given "certificates of dissent" as early as 1792; being freed from supporting the established order they at first united themselves with the Universalist society at Woodstock.<sup>2</sup> The local historian of Barnard has called the formation of the Universalist Church in 1802 "a militant protest against the established order."<sup>3</sup> It began its formal life as a church with thirty-eight members.<sup>4</sup> That some of the leading citizens in these towns were involved in the new societies is plain from the fact

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1. Dana, History of Woodstock, pp. 397-398.

2. William Monroe Newton, History of Barnard, Vermont, with Family Genealogies, 1761-1927 (2 Volumes; n.p.: The Vermont Historical Society, 1928), I, 130f.

3. Ibid., I, 148.

4. Vermont Standard, January 12, 1939.

that at Hartland Timothy Lull, one of the first settlers of the town, cast in his lot with the Universalists<sup>1</sup> when they formed in May of 1802.<sup>2</sup> The same was true at Bethel, where Colonel Joel Marsh of the founding family, joined the new group.<sup>3</sup>

These "Sister Societies" took such interesting names as "The Independent Catholic Society of Woodstock," "The Liberal Catholic Society of Woodstock,"<sup>4</sup> "The Catholic Benevolent Society in Hartland,"<sup>5</sup> etc., as well as the usual name "The Universalist Society...." Only the Barnard group at the beginning was able to build its own meeting house.<sup>6</sup> The meetings were held in private homes or in the courthouse, when it was available, at Woodstock;<sup>7</sup> in the "Square room in Colonel Marsh's house" at Bethel;<sup>8</sup> in the school house or at the home of Barnabas Thompson at Bridgewater.<sup>9</sup> At Hartland the Universalists used the so-called Union meeting house, but not without a tussle.

1. Nancy Darling, A Brief History of the Universalist Society of Hartland, Vermont, During its First Century, with Biographical Sketches (Castleton, Vermont: 1902), p. 5.

2. Ibid., pp. 9-10.

3. Mary Grace Canfield, "Early Universalism in Vermont and the Connecticut Valley" (Woodstock, Vermont: 1941); unpublished manuscript in the possession of the Universalist Historical Society Library, Crane Theological School, Tufts University, p. 202.

4. Ibid., p. 202.

5. Darling, Universalist Society of Hartland, p. 9.

6. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 257.

7. Canfield, "Early Universalism in Vermont," p. 214.

8. Ibid.; p. 202.

9. Ibid., p. 191.

"I cannot allow heresy preached in this sacred place!," cried Elder Cheever when the Universalists first proposed using the meeting house.

"But Hosea Ballou preaches the truth, and no heresy. I have heard him. He is a great man," answered "Old Captain" Williams.

Despite loud opposition from some of the townspeople Hosea preached his first "formal" sermon at the Union meeting house in March of 1803. There was no disturbance that morning, however, possibly due to the fact that "Old Captain" William was observed to have in his hand--a club!<sup>1</sup>

As Hosea rode his circuit, he would stay overnight at the houses of his parishioners. He journeyed from Barnard to Hartland via Woodstock and would often stay at Seth Darling's place on the outskirts of Hartland. One night he found himself in the company of a Methodist preacher who also was taking advantage of the Darling hospitality. During the course of the evening the Methodist "discoursed earnestly" with Hosea in an attempt to demonstrate the errors of his theology. As was natural, Hosea during the course of the debate drew heavily on the letters of Paul for Scriptural citations. Finally, the Methodist preacher exclaimed rather heatedly, "I suppose you think St. Paul was the greatest Universalist!" "By no means," answered Hosea,

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1. Darling, Universalist Society of Hartland, pp. 9, 11.

"Jesus Christ was the greatest Universalist."<sup>1</sup>

It can be assumed that Hosea had much contact with the Methodists during his stay in Vermont. They, with the Universalists, dissented from the established order in Barnard.<sup>2</sup> And Hosea is said to have attended their meetings at Woodstock. That he could barely restrain himself may be inferred from the fact that it was stipulated that he could speak "if he would wait till his turn came."<sup>3</sup>

It is fortunate that the contract of settlement between Hosea and the Hartland society has survived in the records of that church. It was signed on January 27, 1803, and there is every reason to believe that the same provisions were in the contracts made between Hosea and the other "Sister Societies."

This Indenture between Hosea Ballou on the one part and the Catholic Benevolent Society of Hartland on the other Witnesseth that the sd Hosea shall settle in the town of Barnard and preach to the Universal Societies in Barnard Woodstock and Hartland one fourth of the time in each place and to attend to all the duties of a minister of the Gospel in sd Societies while in Health and in the good Fellowship of the Convention of the Universal Churches and Societies as established in the four New England States and the sd Society promise and engage on their part to pay to the sd Hosea the sum of Seventy five Dollars in good Salable Neat Stock at cash price on the first day of Oct. next to be delivered at the Dwelling House of Alexander Campbell in Hartland to be considered as a

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1. Ibid., p. 12.
  2. Newton, History of Barnard.
  3. Dana, History of Woodstock, p. 80.

settlement.

Signed sealed and delivered on the 27 day of January  
1803.....<sup>1</sup>

Hosea's finances must have been in a precarious condition. He had chosen to live at Barnard because many of those who had settled in that town had come from Hardwick; thus he was among friends.<sup>2</sup> But that he was not welcomed with open arms by all of the citizens of that place is certain. Because of his bad financial condition, and possibly because he espoused an unpopular religious sentiment, he was treated by the officials of Barnard as a vagrant and served with a notice which was reserved for prospective paupers:

State of Vermont  
Windsor County, ss.

To the constable in the town of Barnard in the  
county of Windsor,  
Greeting.

You are hereby required to summon Hosea Ballou  
and wife and children and A. Moses now residing in  
Barnard to depart said town. Hereof fail not but of  
this precept and your doings herein due return make  
according to law

Given under our hands at Barnard this 28th of  
July, A.D. 1803

Thomas Freeman  
Alexander Bowman  
Selectmen <sup>3</sup>

The latter part of September, 1803, was a busy time for  
Hosea, and an important time for the Universalist denomination.

1. Darling, Universalist Society of Hartland, p: 11.  
2. Canfield, "Early Universalism in Vermont," p: 196.  
3. Quoted by Vermont Standard, January 12, 1939.

At the General Convention of 1802 the Reverend Walter Ferris of the Charlotte and Monkton, Vermont, churches had proposed that the Convention adopt a statement of faith.<sup>1</sup> Up to this point Universalists had been opposed to "human creeds,"<sup>2</sup> although "Articles of Faith" had been adopted by a Universalist Convention at Philadelphia in May of 1790.<sup>3</sup> A committee was appointed to draw up a plan of faith and fellowship and to report the following year.<sup>4</sup> Although he was on the committee, there is no evidence that Hosea was interested in formulating such a statement. With one exception, it is not known that he ever referred to what came to be known as the "Winchester Profession." That one exception was many years later in 1847.

When the convention met at Winchester, New Hampshire, not far from Hosea's boyhood home at Richmond, feelings on the subject of a "creed" were running high. Since John Murray was not present, one problem--a clear statement on the trinity--did not present itself.<sup>5</sup> Walter Ferris, who had originally proposed that a statement of faith be adopted, was (in good parliamentary style) given the job of drawing up one which would be acceptable to all.<sup>6</sup>

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1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, pp. 164-165.
  2. Ibid., I, 165.
  3. Eddy, History of Universalism, I, 297ff.
  4. Ibid., I, 164.
  5. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 174.
  6. Ibid.

When the "Profession" was brought to the convention floor, a prolonged and warm debate began. Hosea and the rest of the committee naturally called for its adoption. Among those who fought against adoption were persons who feared creeds and all the bigotry that goes with them. The most notable opposition came from Noah Murray who rose to say: "It is harmless now-- it is a calf, and its horns have not yet made their appearance; but it will soon grow older-- its horns will grow, and then it will begin to hook." To this picturesque complaint Zephaniah Laithe, one of the committee, replied: "All that Br. Murray has said would be correct, had he not made a mistake in the animal. It is not a calf; it is a dove; and who ever heard of a dove having horns, at any age?" The opposition finally yielded when a resolution was appended to the Profession to the effect that it was never to be altered in the future.<sup>1</sup> This allayed the fears that the Profession someday would become an instrument of oppression or exclusion. So it was adopted September 22, 1803.

Just five days later Hosea was re-ordained and installed as pastor of the "Sister Societies," the service being held at Barnard. It was expedient to re-ordain Hosea in accord with Vermont law, since the ministers of the established Congregational order in many cases disputed the legality of

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1. Stacy, Memoirs, quoted by Ibid., I, 179.

marriages performed by Universalists.<sup>1</sup> He was presented with his ordination certificate signed by those who took part in his ordaining council and in the service:

In the name of the General Convention of the Universalist Churches of the New England States:

To all to whom these presents shall come,  
Christian Salutation and Benediction:

Now know ye, that Brother Hosea Ballou, of Barnard, Vt., was regularly ordained, as a preacher of the gospel, according to the Abrahamic faith-- which is that in thy seed, and that seed Christ, shall all the nations, all the families, and all the kindreds of the earth be blessed,--at Barnard, Vt., on Tuesday, the 27th of September, 1803; and he is hereby commended to the whole family of Adam, who are enabled to receive him in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

Given under our hands, at Barnard, Vt., September 27th, 1803.

Joab Young, Presiding Elder  
George Richards  
Samuel Hilliard,  
James Babbitt  
Walter Ferris<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting that the early Universalists thought it necessary to define and propagandize their faith even in an ordination certificate!

Despite the fact that Hosea was now supposedly "settled" over these Vermont churches, he still spent much of his time in travelling.<sup>3</sup> It was while itinerating that he became involved in a dispute, the effects of which were to be felt for years after. In June, 1805, Hosea was in West Rutland

1. Ibid., I, 172n.

2. Quoted by Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 173n.

3. Ibid., I, 305.

at the invitation of several persons who were interested in hearing the Universal gospel preached. Present in the meeting house that day was the Reverend Lemuel Haynes, a mulatto, the minister of the Congregational church. Haynes had been asked repeatedly to come and dispute with Ballou; when he refused, he was charged with "dishonesty and cowardice,"<sup>1</sup> until he finally relented and came to hear Hosea. Hosea invited him to take part in the service but Haynes declined, saying he had just come to listen. After a bit of urging, he agreed to share the pulpit with the guest preacher.<sup>2</sup> Hosea delivered his sermon on the text:

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.<sup>3</sup>

The sermon was mostly an elaboration of the text, with, the Universalists claimed, no sectarian overtones.<sup>4</sup> When he had concluded he invited Haynes to make any remarks he might wish. Haynes entered the desk and, without making any reference to Hosea's sermon, preached on the text: "And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die."<sup>5</sup>

1. Lemuel Haynes, A. M., Universal Salvation, a very Ancient Doctrine: with some account of the Life and Character of its Author. A Sermon delivered at Rutland, West Parish, in the year 1805 (9th edition; Boston: 1814), p. 3. (1st ed., New Haven: 1806.)

2. Whittemore; Life of Ballou, I, 239.

3. I John 4:10, 11.

4. Whittemore; Life of Ballou, I, 239.

5. Genesis 3:4.

He cleverly pictured the Devil in the form of the serpent in Eden as the first Universalist itinerant preacher.

Happy were the human pair amidst this delightful Paradise, until a certain preacher, in his journey, came that way, and disturbed their peace and tranquility, by endeavouring to reverse the prohibition of the Almighty, as in our text, ye shall not surely die.<sup>1</sup>

Haynes goes on to trace the itineracy of "the first Universalist preacher" in his various guises through the centuries always preaching his "ancient devilish doctrine."<sup>2</sup> The conception of the sermon is witty, and lends itself perfectly to satire and sarcasm.

As the author of the foregoing discourse has confined himself wholly to the character of Satan, he trusts no one will feel himself personally injured by this short sermon; but should any imbibe a degree of friendship for this aged divine, and think that I have not treated this Universal Preacher with that respect and veneration which he justly deserves, let them be so kind as to point it out, and I will most cheerfully retract; for it has ever been maxim with me--RENDER UNTO ALL THEIR DUES.<sup>3</sup>

When Haynes had finished, Hosea thought it best not to answer him, figuring that he would feel sorry for his action after he had time for sober reflection.<sup>4</sup> But, far from feeling sorry, Haynes immortalized his words in print.<sup>5</sup> In an "epistle" to Haynes dated Barnard, April 22, 1806,

1. Haynes, Universal Salvation, p. 5.
2. Ibid., p. 10.
3. Ibid., pp. 10-11
4. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 241.
5. Universal Salvation, a very Ancient Doctrine: with some account of the Life and Character of its Author. A Sermon delivered at Rutland, West Parish, in the year 1805. (9th edition; Boston, 1814). (First edition, New Haven: 1806)

Hosea reprimanded him for his sermon which was "fraught with low cunning and spirited satire, and delivered with an aspect perfectly suited to the subject."<sup>1</sup> Hosea's reply is, as he admits, in language "full severe."<sup>2</sup> Haynes in turn replied to Hosea in a "letter" not designed to smooth ruffled feelings.<sup>3</sup> The effects of Haynes' sermon were felt for years by Hosea and his fellow Universalists. It went through many editions;<sup>4</sup> and Hosea was still refuting its implications as

1. Hosëa Ballou, Epistle to Lemuel Haynes, Reply to his Sermon. Reprinted in The Universalist Magazine, III (August 18, 1821), 28. (Original edition: 1806. Also reprinted in Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 241-251.)

2. Ibid.

3. A Letter to Reverend Hosea Ballou, being a Reply to his Epistle to the Author; or, his attempt to vindicate the old Universal Preacher (Rutland: 1807). (Reprinted in Timothy Mather Cooley, Sketches of the Life and Character of the Rev. Lemuel Haynes, A. M., for Many Years Pastor of a Church in Rutland, Vt., and late in Granville, New-York. Introduction by William B. Sprague. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1837)

4. Haynes' biographer stated: "This discourse has been printed and reprinted, both in America and in Great Britain, till no one pretends to give any account of the number of editions." Cooley, Lemuel Haynes, p. 96. Ballou in The Universalist Magazine took note of various reprints and editions and took occasion to again refute Haynes: See II (March 10, 1821), 146-147; V (September 20, 1823), 48. The entire controversy was published, probably through the efforts of Haynes, in An Interesting Controversy between Lemuel Haynes and Hosea Ballou, consisting First, of a Sermon by Mr. Haynes, delivered at West Rutland, in the year 1805, entitled, "Universal Salvation, a very Ancient Doctrine: with some Account of the Life and Character of its Author," immediately after hearing Mr. Ballou exhibit his sentiments in support of that Doctrine. Second, An Epistle from Mr. Ballou to Mr. Haynes, being a reply to his Sermon delivered at West Rutland. Third, A Letter of Mr. Haynes to Mr. Ballou, in Reply to the Epistle (Rutland: 1807). Some years later an anonymous pamphlet appeared taking the side of Ballou: A Plain Answer to "A Sermon, delivered at Rutland West-Parish, in the year

late as 1834 in a sermon in Philadelphia.<sup>1</sup>

Hosea took part in varied activities in his years as a pastor in Vermont. He was active in the Masonic order, having been attracted when younger by its profession of brotherly love.<sup>2</sup> In June of 1806 he preached to the brethren at a Masonic festival at Chester, Vermont, choosing as his subject, "Let brotherly love continue."<sup>3</sup> He appears to have been prominent in the lodge, for in 1811 he was to be elected Junior Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of New Hampshire, one of the highest offices in the state.<sup>4</sup>

Hosea made several trips in behalf of the General Convention, visiting various associations of Universalists. This activity made for him many friends and helped to spread

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1805," entitled "Universal Salvation a very Ancient Doctrine: with some Account of the Life and Character of its Author, by Lemuel Haynes, A.M." In Prose and Poetic Composition (Weathersfield, Vt.: 1815). Since this pamphlet is not available, the present writer is not able to determine its authorship by internal evidence. Eddy, History of Universalism, II, 498, speculates that Ballou was the author, but it was not Hosea's habit to choose anonymity.

1. Hosea Ballou, Nine Sermons on Important Doctrinal and Practical Subjects, delivered in Philadelphia, November, 1834. (Philadelphia: 1835), pp. 94ff.

2. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 27ln.

3. Hebrews 13:1. Walter Ferriss and Hosea Ballou, Five Sermons...by the late Walter Ferris, Pastor of the Universal Church in Charlotte and Monkton, Vt., to which is subjoined a Festival Sermon, by Brother Hosea Ballou (Randolph, Vermont: 1807), pp. 90-104.

4. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 27ln.

his influence. His visit to the Western Association which was held in June of 1806 at Columbus, Chenango County, New York, was particularly stimulating. The crowds attending were so large that the meetings were held in a forest.<sup>1</sup>

On his way home to Vermont he preached to large gatherings at such places as Brookfield, where his friend and former theological student Nathaniel Stacy was propounding the gospel, at New Hartford, and Utica.<sup>2</sup>

These were years of joy and sadness for Hosea and Ruth. Sometime during the year 1804<sup>3</sup> Hosea's brother Nathan sent word from Richmond that their father Maturin had passed away. His body was placed next to that of his beloved Lydia and a matching stone with the letters "M.B." was placed next to hers.<sup>4</sup>

That same year their fourth child came into the Ballou household. Hosea's poetic foible was again to the fore as

1. Ibid., I, 257-258.

2. Ibid., I, 260.

3. The exact date is not known. A. Ballou, The Ballous in America, p. 69.

4. These stones are still to be seen today in "Benson's Cemetery" on the hillside near the Ballou farm in Ballou's-Dell. Universalists have erected also a large, solid, marble stone which will for centuries stand as a monument to the parents of Hosea Ballou. The inscription reads:

REV. MATURIN BALLOU  
1722                      1804

LYDIA HARRIS BALLOU  
1728                      1773

he named this new daughter, Mandana.<sup>1</sup>

One more child was born to them in Vermont. Elmina came into the world in December of 1807.<sup>2</sup> Their joy was short-lived, however, for within a month, little Elmina was no more.<sup>3</sup> It was with heavy heart that Hosea penned the lines for the grave stone:

The graceful flower was lent, not  
     given.  
 Faded on earth, yet blooms in  
     heaven.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Born September 17, 1804. Statistic from A. Ballou, The Ballous in America, p. 131.

2. Newton, History of Barnard, II, 38.

3. Died January 2, 1808. Ibid.

4. Stone to be seen in the Central Cemetery, Barnard, Vermont. Vermont Standard, January 12, 1939.

## CHAPTER VIII

### "OF MAKING MANY BOOKS...."

Hosea found that opposition to the doctrine of Universal salvation was most often based on the parables of Jesus in the gospels. Parables such as the Sheep and the Goats of Matthew 25:31-46 were thought to be certain evidence that Christ believed in and predicted a future judgment, and eternal damnation for a large part of mankind. After a long day's journey during which he preached several sermons, Hosea more often than not would be approached by someone who wanted to argue with him the question of endless punishment on the basis of the New Testament parables. It was this circumstance which led him to determine to put down on paper his explanations of such passages. By having his views in pamphlet form, he could hand a copy to anyone anxious for the truth.<sup>1</sup>

Hosea began writing his Notes on the Parables about January, 1804.<sup>2</sup> The necessary leisure came when he was stricken with an illness which was serious enough to keep him indoors, but not serious enough to keep him from his desk.<sup>3</sup> The result was an eighty-page pamphlet. He had

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1. Hosea Ballou, Notes on the Parables of the New Testament (Randolph, Vermont: 1804), p. iv.

2. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 186.

3. H. Ballou, Notes on the Parables, p. iv.

one-thousand copies of it printed.<sup>1</sup>

The parables, says Hosea, are interpreted very differently in various pulpits. Since laymen mostly depend on the preachers for interpretation, this clash of views embitters, and causes difficulties among Christians. Although he does not think that he can clear up all the difficulties, he will make a start toward the goal, hoping a "more able writer" will carry on from there.<sup>2</sup>

Hosea's pamphlet is an earnest attempt to elucidate the parables. There is almost a complete lack of the polemics which characterize later editions of the Notes and his other writings. Also lacking is the humor, the witty thrusts at opponents, the parodies, and the bits of sarcasm, which spice his other writings.

From the modern critical point of view Hosea's explanation of the parables is outmoded. His is an allegorical, mystical, interpretation. This being the case, it is difficult to understand how he expected Christians to come to an agreement on their meaning. This allegorical approach, of course, allows him to explain in his own manner those texts which were cited by opponents against Universalism. For instance, the unquenchable fire which consumes the chaff<sup>3</sup>

1. Hosea Ballou, Notes on the Parables of the New Testament (5th ed. rev. [Actually, 4th ed.] ; Boston: 1832), p. 7.

2. Notes on the Parables (1804 ed.), p. iii.

3. Matthew 3:12.

separated from the wheat is God.

We cannot conceive of more than one unquenchable fire, and that one is GOD, as it is written, our GOD is a consuming fire; it cannot be supposed that this fire is quenchable, neither can we with propriety suppose another unquenchable fire, as that would be supposing another nature equal to GOD himself.<sup>1</sup>

This divine fire consumes the chaff of human nature, or, as Hosea called it, "the Adamic" nature. With the chaff consumed, left is the wheat or heavenly nature of man.<sup>2</sup> This interpretation not only allowed Hosea to cut the ground from under the then prevalent idea that the chaff represented men destined for hell, but also enabled him to express his conviction that human nature when freed from its corruptions is akin the nature of Christ and God. Or, to change the figure,

We are taught that all momentous truth and sublime doctrinal idea of the real nature of man, which absolutely stands in relation to Christ, or his gospel, as meal does to leaven; for, it may be observed, that leaven could have no possible operation in meal, did not the meal, in its own nature, possess a quality that naturally adhered to leaven.

The final effects of divine grace in the ministry of reconciliation, in which we look for universal submission to Christ in his glorious and ever blessed kingdom, is communicated in that it is said, "until the whole was leavened!"<sup>3</sup>

Despite the basic weakness of his allegorical interpretation, Hosea recognized an important truth concerning the gospel records. Those passages which represent Jesus as

1. Ibid., p. 10.

2. Ibid.

3. Exposition of Matthew 13:33. Ibid., pp. 27-28.

predicting the coming of the Son of man on the clouds of heaven, he applied to the earthly life of the disciples<sup>1</sup> and not to an after-life as did the orthodox, for Jesus had said, "there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."<sup>2</sup> But Hosea understood this to apply not to a physical appearance but to a spiritual experience; thus he believed the Second Coming of Christ had occurred at Pentecost.<sup>3</sup> (Believing as he did that the Bible is the word of God, he could not conceive of Jesus' prediction having been wrong.)

These ideas were to be expressed more fully in his Treatise on Atonement the following year. The Notes were to prove very popular in Universalist circles. They appeared in an enlarged edition in 1812 and many times thereafter. From this first intentional appearance in print<sup>4</sup> Hosea learned the power of the press. He was to put it to use many times in the cause of Universalism.

Among his other writings of this period are many hymns. Hosea had a weakness for verse--poetry, it cannot be called. He never had any training in the art, and never really considered himself a poet.<sup>5</sup> This being the case, it is

1. Notes on the Parables, p. 49.

2. Matthew 16:28.

3. Notes on the Parables, p. 49.

4. The Literary Correspondence of 1799 was published against his will.

5. Hosea Ballou, A Voice to Universalists (Boston: 1849), p. 127.

difficult to understand why he should have offered his "poetic" effusions to the public. His first indiscretion occurred as the result of action taken by the General Convention. In the meetings of 1805, 1806, and 1807, the Convention appointed Hosea to a committee to issue a hymnbook for use in the Universalist churches.<sup>1</sup> That there was a pressing need for such a book cannot be doubted. The most popular hymnbook of the day was, of course, that of Isaac Watts. But that great English divine stressed the theme of eternal punishment "and has thereby sorely wounded the divine theme of devotional Psalmody...."<sup>2</sup> Those collections compiled by Universalists of the day were little better; their theory of the atonement was unsatisfactory<sup>3</sup> in view of the changes taking place in Universalist thinking. "It was a thing much desired by the Convention that the rising generation might learn to sing the praises of the Captain of our salvation, without mixing the alloy of dishonor in the sacred song."<sup>4</sup>

So it was that Hosea Ballou, Abner Kneeland, and Edward Turner were given the task of furnishing a hymnbook.<sup>5</sup> They

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1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 252, 256, 267.

2. Hymns Composed by Different Authors, at the Request of the General Convention of Universalists of the New England States and Others. Adapted to Public and Private Devotion (Charlestown: 1810), p. iii. [1st ed., Walpole, New Hampshire: 1808.]

3. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 270, 270n.

4. Hymns of Different Authors, p. iii.

5. Ibid.

were commissioned to compile a book--not to write one. On "mature consideration," however, the committee decided not to put the societies to the expense of a new book which would contain many of the same hymns in the collections they already owned. So the committee decided to write their own!<sup>1</sup> Such a step would have been wise if on "mature consideration" the members of the committee had decided that they had the necessary talent. But the talent was lacking. Of the more than four hundred hymns contained in the collection, Hosea wrote 193! Abner Kneeland followed close behind with 138. The remainder were supplied by Sebastian Streeter, Edward Turner, and the "rustic poet" of Richmond, Silas Ballou.

Since "time makes ancient good uncouth," it is best to turn to Hosea's contemporaries for an evaluation of "the Convention Hymnbook." When the book appeared in 1808, Universalists found that some of the hymns showed poetic talent, but others were much too argumentative for public worship.<sup>2</sup>

The hymnbook was put to the test; it was found lacking. Within five years or so most of the Universalist societies had discarded it and turned back to Watts or to the book of Murray's First Universalist Society in Boston, despite the objectionable references to the trinity and vicarious

1. Ibid., p. iv.

2. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 275.

atonement found in them.<sup>1</sup>

Hosea continued to write hymns, however, and, as a matter of fact, several of his were popular with Universalists during and immediately after his lifetime. They, however, have not stood the test of time. By 1900 only five of his hymns were included in the Universalist collection;<sup>2</sup> by 1917 only two were included.<sup>3</sup> In the current Universalist-Unitarian collection<sup>4</sup> there is nothing to indicate that Ballou ever indulged in hymnody.

In 1808 Ebenezer Paine of Washington, New Hampshire, suggested to Hosea that they arrange for a debate with several Congregationalist ministers of New Hampshire and Vermont on the points which divided the standing order and the Universalists. The debate never was arranged but as a result of the effort a pamphlet controversy began between Hosea and Paine on one side and the Reverends Reed Page of Hancock and Isaac Robinson of Stoddard, New Hampshire, on the other.<sup>5</sup>

1. Ibid., pp. 270-271.

2. Church Harmonies New and Old. A Book of Spiritual Song for Christian Worshippers (Boston: Universalist Publishing House, 1900).

3. Hymns of the Church, with Services and Chants (Boston: The Murray Press, 1917).

4. Hymns of the Spirit for use in the Free Churches of America (Boston: Beacon Press 1953). [1st ed., 1937.]

5. Hosea Ballou and Ebenezer Paine, A Doctrinal Controversy, between the Hopkintonian and the Universalist; begun on the part of the Universalist by Brother Ebenezer Paine, of Washington, N. H., and Brother Hosea Ballou, of Barnard, Vt. To be continued by the Rev. Reed Page, of Hancock, and the Rev. Isaac Robinson, of Stoddard, N. H., on the part of the Hopkintonian (Randolph, Vermont: 1808).

Paine, proving unequal to the task,<sup>1</sup> the burden of the debate soon fell to Hosea. His was the job of answering Robinson<sup>2</sup> who managed the debate from the Hopkinsian point of view. Robinson's Candid Reply Hosea countered with A Candid Review.<sup>3</sup> The main question involved in the controversy was whether God is equally good to all. Hosea, naturally, took the positive; Robinson, the negative. Much of the controversy was concerned with procedure in debate; this was especially true of Hosea's Candid Review.

Such controversies were welcomed by Hosea who was a born debater. Whereas the modern reader is impressed mainly by the superfluity of words in the controversies of that day, he and many of his colleagues were convinced of their efficacy:

The minds of men in general are much influenced by the prejudices of education; it therefore requires argument to be brought in as plain and direct a manner as possible, in order to get the mind awake so as to think.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 282.

2. Isaac Robinson, A.M., A Candid Reply to a late Publication entitled "A Doctrinal Controversy between the Hopkintonian and the Universalist..." (Keene, New Hampshire: 1809).

3. Hosea Ballou, A Candid Review of a Pamphlet entitled a Candid Reply; the whole being a Doctrinal Controversy between the Hopkintonian and the Universalist by E. Paine and H. Ballou. And continued on the part of the Hopkintonian by the Rev. Isaac Robinson, A.M., of Stoddard, N. H. And now further continued on the part of the Universalist (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: n.d. [probably 1809]).

4. Ibid., p. 205.

It was this faith in the power of argument which was responsible for the style of Hosea's best work of this period, A Treatise on Atonement. Published in 1805, it was the result of almost fifteen years of theological re-thinking. His radical changes of thought regarding the nature of sin, the trinity, and the atonement, were now systematized to the point where he felt justified in presenting to the world his religious philosophy. This he did in a book filled with apt, homely illustrations which no doubt reflect the sermons he was preaching at this period. It is conversational, argumentative, peppered with sudden thrusts of pungent wit. It is not difficult to imagine the ripples of laughter which must have swept his country audiences as Hosea demolished the dogma of the trinity by characterizing it as the "amazing sum of infinity, multiplied by three!"<sup>1</sup>

The Treatise was eagerly awaited by the Universalists,<sup>2</sup> and when it appeared it had a tremendous effect on them. Hosea's arguments were repeated with the complete confidence that they were "unanswerable."<sup>3</sup> It was especially popular among the young Universalist preachers, Abner Kneeland,

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1. A Treatise on Atonement, p. 93.  
2. Hosea Ballou, 2d, "Rise and Prevalence of Unitarian Views among the Universalists," The Universalist Quarterly and General Review, V (October, 1848), 375.  
3. Ibid.

Hosea's good friend, swallowing it "in total."<sup>1</sup>

The book's impact can be seen by the fact that some years later a pirated edition was brought out at Bennington, Vermont,<sup>2</sup> the pirate in question justifying his action in this manner: "Such a book is unlike other books,--it belongs to all the world,--no restriction ought to be put upon its publication or its sale."<sup>3</sup> The many legitimate editions brought out during and after Hosea's lifetime also attest to its popularity. The person interested in the evolution of liberal religious thought in America will agree with the words inscribed by an anonymous pen on the inside cover of a first edition now in the possession of the Universalist Historical Society:

This precious Book  
cannot be read too often,  
nor studied too much.

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1. Letter of George Richards to Edward Turner, May 4, 1807, quoted in The Universalist Quarterly, (New Series) VIII (July, 1871), 272n.

2. H. Ballou, A Treatise on Atonement, etc. (Bennington, Vermont: 1811).

3. Quoted by Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 235.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE GREAT TREATISE

Hosea Ballou's great object in writing A Treatise on Atonement was to free the Scriptures from the encumbrances which have made it "a subject of discredit to thousands."<sup>1</sup> He attempts to clear away conceptions which have "served to darken the human understanding and obscure the gospel of eternal life...."<sup>2</sup> In this category he places the idea that sin is infinite and needs an infinite punishment because the law transgressed is infinite; the idea that the great Jehovah "took on himself a natural body of flesh and blood, and actually suffered on a cross, to satisfy his infinite justice, and thereby save his creatures from endless misery...."<sup>3</sup>

These ideas are not only unscriptural but--and this is equally important--they are unreasonable. God created men as reasonable beings; therefore, "we ought...to believe, that all the truth which is necessary for our belief, is not only reasonable, but reducible to our understandings."<sup>4</sup> Hosea

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1. A Treatise on Atonement; in which the Finite Nature of Sin is Argued, its Causes and Consequences as such; the Necessity and Nature of Atonement, and its Glorious Consequences in the Final Reconciliation of All Men to Holiness and Happiness (Randolph, Vermont: 1805), p. iv.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

places himself firmly on the side of the eighteenth century cult of reason.

Ballou divides his 216- page treatise into three general areas in which he discusses sin, atonement for sin, and the consequences of atonement for mankind. He likens this division to a physical disorder, the remedy, and health which is enjoyed as a result of the remedy.<sup>1</sup>

Ballou argues against the prevalent notion that sin is infinite. Man's capacity to understand is definitely limited. This being so, it is not possible for man to have a perfect understanding of the law of God. "Sin is the violation of a law which exists in the mind, which law is the imperfect knowledge men have of moral good." This imperfect knowledge of man justifies the idea that the nature of man's sin is not infinite--but finite.<sup>2</sup> A person commits sin when he yields to temptation and makes a choice contrary to his understanding of what is good.<sup>3</sup>

Hosea carefully examines the idea that sin is infinite. If the usual theory is true, the interesting situation occurs of finite man thwarting the law of an infinite legislator, God. "With eyes open, the reader cannot but see, that if sin is infinite because it is committed against an infinite law, whose author is God, the design of Deity must be

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1. Ibid., p. 15.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

abortive...."<sup>1</sup> Since God is a Being of infinite wisdom, it is unthinkable that the end result of any of His actions could frustrate His will.

Now to reason justly, we must conclude, that if God possesses infinite wisdom, he could never intend any thing to take place, or be, that will not take place, or be; nor that which is or will be, not to be, at the time when it is.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the strained English construction, Hosea make an able case for the all-powerfulness of an infinite God! It is impossible, he says, to conceive of God's suffering disappointment in the smallest matter, or it would be impossible for man to have any "satisfactory evidence whereby to prove that any thing, at present, in the whole universe, is as the Supreme intended."<sup>3</sup> This stress on the omnipotence of God is an essential part of Hosea's thought; without it, he could not be sure that all men would be saved.

He continues to hammer at the theme that sin which is infinite would frustrate God's plan in creation. If sin is infinite, goodness cannot be greater. If sin is infinite, it cannot be said that God is greater. God "cannot be superior to that which is equal to himself."<sup>4</sup> If sin is infinite, it cannot be limited in its consequences and God, himself, as well as all created beings, would not be able to avoid its

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1. Ibid., p. 16.

2. H. Ballou, Treatise on Atonement, pp. 16-17.

3. Ibid., p. 17.

4. Ibid., p. 18.

consequences. If there is such a thing as divine justice, sin must be bounded by it, and, if sin is bounded by it, it (sin) obviously cannot be infinite.<sup>1</sup>

Turning from these arguments from reason, Hosea takes note of those who would attempt to prove the infinity of sin from Scripture. A favorite passage for this purpose is Job 22:5--"Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?" Hosea turns the exegetical tables on his opponents by putting this text into context. He points out that these are the words of the Timnite whom God specifically refutes in chapter 42:7-

...After the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said unto Eliphaz the Timnite, my wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends, for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right as my servant Job hath.<sup>2</sup>

Still on Scriptural grounds, Hosea points out that if sin is infinite, no one sin is greater than another. The most piddling offense against society is "equal to blasphemy against the Holy Ghost." Did not Christ himself speak of a variation in the intensity of sin?<sup>3</sup>

Sin, then, is a violation of a law which exists in the mind, and since man's knowledge is definitely circumscribed, this law of the mind is definitely finite. The mentality of a finite being militates against the belief that man can

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., p. 19.

3. Matthew 12:31; Ibid.

be subject to a law which is above his capacity to understand.<sup>1</sup>

The influence of Petitpierre's On Divine Goodness is very evident as Ballou turns to a consideration of the good use to which God puts sin. Man never can foresee all the consequences of his actions. This is illustrated perfectly by the brothers who sold Joseph into captivity. If their sin had been infinite, nothing good could have come from it. But, such was not the case. God was superintending the affair. What was evil in the sight of men, was used by God for a good end.<sup>2</sup>

...What, in a limited sense, we may justly call sin, or evil, in an unlimited sense is justly called good. We say, of the top of yonder mountain, it is exceedingly high; and of yonder valley, it is low; and this we justly say, by comparing one with the other, in respect to the centre of our earth. But the moment we extend our thoughts to contemplate the millions of worlds in unbounded space, and take the whole in one grand system; the idea of high and low is lost. So is sin finished, when, by divine grace, our understandings are enlightened, and we hear our spiritual Joseph say, "Grieve not yourselves, ye meant it unto evil, but God meant it unto good".<sup>3</sup>

Hosea does not mean to mitigate the seriousness of sin in man's life. Sin is very real, for it is in a man's intention. A man with an evil intention may accidentally do good to a neighbor, but his sin is none the less real. On the

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1. H. Ballou, Treatise on Atonement, p. 20.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 21.

other hand, the individual who intends good and sees evil result from his action is not guilty of sin. "...It is then an evil intention that constitutes an evil action."<sup>1</sup> Often Hosea was confronted by people who said that if he were right it would make sense "to do evil, that good may come." But such an objection is self-contradictory. For if a person intends an action for good, it cannot be called sin. "Then it is plain, that to do evil, that good may come, is impossible."<sup>2</sup>

In his examination of the origin of sin, Ballou retells at length the story of the fallen angels and dismisses it as a "chimerical story from the bard, Milton."<sup>3</sup> This fanciful myth does not provide a satisfactory explanation of the origin of sin. He chooses instead to determine the origin of sin on the basis of the Scriptures using the assistance of reason, "without which, the scriptures would be of no more service to us than they are to the brute creation...."<sup>4</sup>

Having rejected the Miltonian interpretation of the origin of sin, Hosea presents a fanciful theory of his own.<sup>5</sup> It is based on a figurative interpretation of the Adam and

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1. Ibid.
  2. Ibid., p. 59.
  3. Ibid., p. 24.
  4. Ibid., p. 29.
  5. Ibid., pp. 29-34.

Eve story in Genesis. Hosea distinguishes between the creation and the formation of man. Following Scripture he sees man as created in God's image. This image is Christ, "the beginning of the creation of God;" so, man partakes of the heavenly nature. In this sense, man was created; then, he was formed of the dust of the ground. It is at this point that man becomes subject to all of the vanities of human nature.

He has now, not an immortal, but a mortal constitution; is possessed of natural appetites and passions; and being unacquainted with the ways of his own imperfect self, knew neither the good or evil of a mortal state. If it be said, that man was not mortal, before he sinned, and that he became mortal by sin, it is a saying as distant from good reason as imagination can go. For if man was not mortal before transgression, he must have been immortal; if he was immortal, he was not subject to change, but remains still in the same immortal state; and all our notions about the mortality of man is nothing but a groundless chimera. But every day's experience contradicts such absurdities.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, Hosea distinguished between the heavenly and the earthly in the constitution of mankind. The heavenly part of man's nature is responsible for the spiritual yearning of men; the earthly (Adamic) part of his nature is responsible for folly, sin and corruption.<sup>2</sup> Interpreting the Garden story figura-

1. H. Ballou, Treatise on Atonement, pp. 30-31.

2. Ballou may have received the distinction between the creation and formation of man from Ethan Allen, Reason the Oracle of Man, pp. 61-71. If so, he translated it into Biblical terms lacking in the original. This theory has also been attributed to Caleb Rich from whom, it is supposed, Ballou derived it. See W. S. Balch, "Caleb Rich," Universa-

tively, he rejects the literal garden--which cannot be located!<sup>1</sup>--and with it original sin.

Since God saw fit to make man "subject to vanity; to give him a mortal constitution; to fix on his nature those faculties which would, in their operation, oppose the spirit of the heavenly nature," Hosea is subject to the charge that his system makes for a denial of the liberty of the will, and, more serious, makes "God the author of sin." To this he readily agrees. He hastily reminds his readers, however, that, in the light of what has gone before, it must be said that "God may be the innocent and holy cause" of that which is in a limited sense sin but which in God's greater knowledge is good.

It is not casting any disagreeable reflections on the Almighty, to say he determined all things for good; and to believe he supersedes all the affairs of the universe, not excepting sin, is a million times more to the honor of God, than to believe he cannot, or that he does not when he can.<sup>2</sup>

Hosea presents a series of homely arguments to refute

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list Quarterly, (New Series) IX (January, 1872), 62. Balch quotes Russell Streater to the effect that Zephaniah Laithe told him that Caleb Rich claimed to be responsible for the leading ideas in the Treatise. It is not to be doubted that Rich was very influential in the life and thought of Hosea Ballou. But, in the light of Chapter V of this dissertation, it is safe to say that Ballou's main indebtedness lay somewhere else.

1. Ibid., pp. 33-34.
2. Ibid., pp. 34-35.

those who claim man has freedom of will.<sup>1</sup> Some may argue that sin is the result of man's freedom but, Hosea asks, who gave man this liberty? The answer is God, thus demonstrating that God is the original cause of sin.<sup>2</sup> If it be argued that God gives man liberty of will but foresees all that he is to choose, the argument, says Hosea, destroys itself. For if the consequences of man's liberty are known then the consequences are certain "and none of them avoidable."<sup>3</sup> Hosea insists that an infinite God must control all things.

The spring of man's motivations is his search for happiness. In all man does, happiness is his main object. He would not form groups, support government, seek education, study science, or, for that matter, till the soil, if he did not believe he would gain happiness by so doing. The search for happiness is man's stimulus to action.<sup>4</sup> This is in direct contradiction to the "disinterested benevolence" of Samuel Hopkins and the Hopkinsians. (Hosea, however, never names his opponents; he concentrates on their ideas.<sup>5</sup>) There is no

1. Ibid., pp. 36ff.

2. Ibid., p. 36.

3. Ibid., p. 39.

4. H. Ballou, Treatise on Atonement, p. 41.

5. In his introduction, or, "A Letter to the Reader," he states that he is not contending against any particular denomination or sect and so will not quote specific books nor name any group. His only object is to strive against error and to set forth and defend the truth as he understands it. Ibid., p. vi.

such thing as disinterested benevolence, says Ballou. The person who gives of himself or his substance without expecting reward is actually rewarded by the happiness that he sees result from his "benevolent" actions. This is just an example of what "Sacred truth" means by the words: "It is more blessed to give, than to receive." Men are motivated by what they expect will result in happiness. The honest and industrious, the indolent and knavish--each expects happiness from his actions.<sup>1</sup>

Here, then, is the key to sin: man seeks happiness but is often misguided as to what makes for happiness.

The objector will say, to admit that our happiness is the grand object of all we do, destroys the purity of religion, and reduces the whole to nothing but selfishness. To which, I reply, a man acting for his own happiness, if he seeks it in the heavenly system of universal benevolence, knowing that his own happiness is connected with the happiness of his fellow men, which induces him to do justly, and to deal mercifully with all men, he is no more selfish than he ought to be. But a man acting for his own happiness, if he seeks it in the narrow circle of partiality and covetousness, his selfishness is irreligious and wicked.<sup>2</sup>

Hosea sees no reason why man should love holiness for holiness' sake, or God for God's sake. Just as in life we can only like something when it is beneficial to us, so with God. As the psalmist said, "O taste, and see that the Lord is good." Or, the apostle, "We love him because he first

1. Ibid.; p. 42.  
2. Ibid., p. 43.

loved us." Man loves God for his attributes of justice, power, wisdom, love. These cause man to love God, for he knows the benefit derived from these qualities as contrasted with their opposites.<sup>1</sup> Sin, then, is a misapprehension on the part of man as to what makes for happiness. If sin is pictured as pleasure, it will be sought after. Preachers too often give the impression that sin is pleasant, and that it is less pleasant to live a virtuous life. They tell their hearers that they should not risk salvation in a future state by indulging in the pleasures of sin here. But threatening punishment in an after-life is no cure for sin in this. The heart will still crave the evil, even if hands do not commit it for fear of punishment.<sup>2</sup>

Ballou denies the existence of a devil. True he has been universally recognized by Christians and "has been of as much advantage to some, as the Goddess Diana was to the craftsmen of Ephesus," but, such a being as Christians describe with such multifarious duties would have to be omnipresent like the Father and this Hosea refused to concede. As to the Old Serpent who beguiled the first woman, this is but a figurative way of describing "the carnal mind, which is enmity against God." Men need no being to tempt them;

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1. Ibid.; pp. 43-44.

2. Ibid., p. 54.

their passions are sufficient for the task.<sup>1</sup> In the famous temptation Jesus dealt not with the devil but with his own fleshly appetites. He was tempted in all things, as the Scriptures say, yet he was without sin. "If, therefore, we know how we are tempted, we know, also, how he was tempted."<sup>2</sup> Sin, then, is the work of the flesh, or carnal mind.

As a being dependent on his Maker, it is natural for man to worship. But man's carnal mind distorts the true worship of the heavenly nature and blurs the true image of God.

The god of the carnal mind

will surely possess all the vile passions of the old man, Adam, and those religious duties must consist in certain rites, which bear no relation to heaven-born charity, or deeds of kindness. An Almighty, omnipresent, infinitely wise and good, may be talked of; but his wisdom, power and goodness, must be denied; and he must be a great many millions of miles off, fixed to a certain place, yet every where present; infinitely wise and powerful, yet suffers an everlasting violation of his will; possessed of infinite wisdom, yet, is disappointed in his plans; loves some of his creatures, and hates others; is pleased and displeased with the conduct of his creatures; is perfectly unchangeable, yet loves, at one time, and, at another, hates the same object. Such an idol will answer for thousands. Now what are the consequences? Answer, one nation supposes itself the only favorite of God; other people are haters of him, and hated by him. If my God hates those who hate him, I ought to do as my God does, and I will hate them too. One denomination of christians has different ideas of the attributes of their God from another; they are violently opposed to each other; they are at sword's points, they call each other heretics, and doom each other to the endless wrath of their God! All such religion is of

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1. H. Ballou, Treatise on Atonement, p. 45.

2. Ibid., pp. 46-47.

the flesh; the wisdom of it is not from above, but is earthly, sensual and devilish, and those who possess it are tormented day and night with it. Reader, turn over the pages of history, calculate the rivers of blood which have been shed on account of religious disputes, and ask yourself the question, is this religion worthy of a Supreme Being? The devil will have religion, and will have it maintained as long as he can; but then, he must tell the people, that it is none of his, but that it came from the true and living God, or they will not believe it. It is an object with the Old Serpent, to have a great many denominations, and to persuade them that they are individually right, and individually wrong, and to stir up their minds to maintain their respective tenets, and to wage war with each other, which he calls contending correctly for the faith. Many who profess to be called by Him who loved sinners, to preach his gospel, and who pretend to follow the Savior, in the path of meekness, if they happen to think a little different, in matters of faith, they are filled with the greatest vehemency towards each other, which they call holy wrath, or indignation; and you might as well reason with hungry lions, or tigers, as with them, for they worship the beast and they partake largely of his nature. Did they worship the true God, in the spirit of the heavenly man, difference, in particular sentiments, would not hinder their fellowship, and love one to another. All the religion in our world, founded on the partial principles of man's inventions, pointing out particular modes of faith, and forms of worship, is from the carnal man.<sup>1</sup>

The ills of this world, then, are due to the carnal in man overcoming the heavenly portion of his nature. It is the carnal mind which pictures a partial, fickle God. Even the Scriptures are not free from this reflection on the nature of God: some picture him as a changeable deity who is filled with wrath toward sinners, is capable of jealousy,

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1. Ibid., pp. 48-49.

etc., while other parts of the Scriptures reveal a deity who sends his rain and makes his sun to shine on the just and unjust alike.<sup>1</sup> Ballou attempts to reconcile the different pictures of God in the Bible by saying that the idea of the changeable God is the conception of the fleshly mind of the old covenant, while the unchangeable God is the conception of the mind "enlightened by the spirit of the new man, and while walking in the spirit of life in Christ Jesus...."<sup>2</sup>

Christ is the key. Man is unable to fulfill the requirements of the heavenly law while he is carnally minded. But in Christ he gains the perfect wisdom and knowledge necessary. It is possible for man "to keep the law of God perfectly" if he is free of "the earthly Adam" and imbued with the spirit of Christ,<sup>3</sup> for the Savior has made possible an atonement.

In his treatment of the subject of atonement, Ballou begins, as he was wont to do, with a critique of those theories with which he does not agree. He believes that these erroneous theories "besmirch" the character of the Creator. He points out that the usual theories agree in certain fundamentals. Sin is considered an infinite evil since it violates infinite law. Atonement, therefore, must also

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1. H. Ballou, Treatise on Atonement, pp. 65-66.

2. Ibid.; p. 65.

3. Ibid., p. 64.

be infinite. The transgression of Adam, since he broke an infinite law, requires an infinite penalty. And Adam's sin is counted against the whole human race "before they individually existed."<sup>1</sup>

After this initial agreement, the prevalent theories of atonement diverge.

...Divines of the greatest abilities, and of the first rank among the literati, have drained the last faculty of invention, in plodding through the dark regions of metaphysics, to bring up a Samuel to explain the solecism of satisfying an infinite dissatisfaction!<sup>2</sup>

It can be seen from this that Ballou had little patience with the subtle metaphysical arguments of the orthodox divines.<sup>3</sup>

Ballou first considers the Anselmic theory of the atonement which was held by the traditional Calvinists of New England. God foreseeing through all eternity that men would transgress his infinite statutes provided a Mediator to

1. Ibid., p. 67.

2. Ibid.

3. Frank Hugh Foster in his famous work on New England theology accuses Ballou of transgressing "the proprieties of a sober discussion by the bitterness of his expressions against orthodox theories." At the least, Foster feels that Ballou has little sympathy or understanding of the positions of his opponents. Certainly Ballou's treatment of the theories of his opponents is vigorous, in places witty. If, as Foster thought, he is "bitter" it is because of the reflections he believed were cast on his loving Father by the current theories of atonement. It should be noted that, at this stage of his development, Foster had little sympathy with Ballou. See his A Genetic History of the New England Theology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1907), p. 321.

suffer the penalty of this law for certain ones whom he favored by election. Since an infinite law has been violated, only an infinite being is capable of making satisfaction; therefore, God himself takes on the form of man to perform the task.

It is true, they are a little cautious about saying that God himself absolutely died! But they say, that Christ, who was crucified, was really God himself, which must, in effect, amount to the same thing. And in fact, if the Infinite did not suffer death, the whole plan falls, for it is by an infinite sacrifice that they pretend to satisfy an infinite dissatisfaction.<sup>1</sup>

Hosea is incapable of understanding how an infinite dissatisfaction (if the word infinite is to hold its meaning) can be satisfied. But once this satisfaction is made in the orthodox theory, not all men benefit by it--just the elect. The non-elect are "left to suffer endlessly for what Adam did, before they were born."<sup>2</sup>

Of course, Ballou has already shown that sin is not infinite, therefore an infinite satisfaction is not called for. But, he is ever ready to argue on the premises of his "opponent" and this he does with his usual technique.

I will state it, as it is often stated by those who believe it, which is by the likeness of debt and credit. The sinner owed a debt to Divine Justice, which he was unable to discharge; the Divine Being cannot; consistently with his honor, dispense with the pay, but says, I must have what is my due; but as the debtor has not

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1. H. Ballou, Treatise on Atonement, pp. 67-68.

2. Ibid., p. 67.

ability to pay the smallest fraction, Divine Wisdom lays a deep concerted mysterious plan for the debt to be discharged. And how was it? Why, for God to pay it himself!<sup>1</sup>

Hosea is not content to leave this statement unexamined. If such a method is used by God, it certainly is worthy of the imitation of men.

My neighbor owes me an hundred pounds; time of payment comes, and I make a demand for my dues. Says my neighbor, my misfortunes have been such, that I am not the possessor of the smallest fraction of property in the world; and as much as I owe you, I am worse than nothing. I declare to him, positively, that I will not lose so much as a fraction of the interest, and leave him. A friend calls, and asks me how I succeeded in obtaining my dues of my neighbor; I reply, my neighbor is not, nor will he ever be able to pay me any part of my demand. My friend says, he is sorry that I should lose the debt. I answer, I shall not lose it. I have very fortunately, in my meditations on the subject, thought of a method, by which I can avail myself of the whole, to my full satisfaction; and I think it is a method which no person in the world, but myself, could ever have discovered. My friend is curious, and impatient to know the mighty secret, never before found out. The reader may guess his confusion, on my telling him, that, as I have that sum already by me, I am now going to pay up the obligation, before the interest is any larger! This has been called the gospel plan, which contains the depths of infinite wisdom.<sup>2</sup>

To the objector who says a distinction must be made between the persons of the Godhead, Hosea replies that they are so essentially one that it is futile to say that the second person could pay the debt to the first.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid.; p. 68.

2. Ibid., pp. 68-69.

3. Treatise on Atonement, p. 69.

Again, for the sake of argument, Ballou grants this system of atonement is true. This is for the sake of questioning the morality of the transaction. This question of morality played an important part in his rejection of the traditional idea of atonement. He asks "the propriety" of an innocent man suffering in place of the guilty. "It is scripture, reason, and good law, never to condemn the innocent, in order to exculpate the delinquent." In a picturesque illustration he likens it to the president of the United States being executed in place of his would-be assassin because the president requested it be thus.<sup>1</sup>

Hosea raises another moral question. The partiality of the Creator in this plan of atonement is shocking. There is no justification for the idea of election either in scripture or reason. He expresses indignation at the idea that God could be less ethical than his creature, man.

Have we not reason to believe our Creator possessed of as much goodness as he has communicated to us? Can we rationally believe, that he is wanting, in those principles of goodness which he has placed in our understandings?<sup>2</sup>

Why should God show partiality to Adam's progeny when they are all in the same situation? "The sacred oracle declares God to be no respecter of persons; if this is true, he is

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1. Treatise on Atonement, p. 71.

2. Ibid., p. 72.

not a partial being."<sup>1</sup> Hosea piles up Scriptural texts to back up his claim of God's impartiality,<sup>2</sup> and points out that if there were such a being as the devil he would be less wicked than God. The devil just seeks to make man miserable, while the God of the orthodox created millions for endless misery!<sup>3</sup>

Again he compares the ways of such a God to the ways of man. Some argue that God has the right to do to His creatures as He pleases, simply because He has such power. God does not do a thing because it is right but it is right because He does it. This principle, applied to men's affairs, boils down to this: "...Everything that can be done, is moral holiness; and everything that cannot be done, is sin, or moral evil."<sup>4</sup> In effect, might makes right.

Hosea next turns to the Grotian theory of the atonement as held by the Hopkinsians and some of the Arminians.<sup>5</sup> This theory of atonement holds that Christ died not for the salvation of men but for the sole object of glorifying the Father. God's supreme object in everything he does is to glorify Himself. Christ died "for the honor of divine justice, and the glory of his Father." His death fully

1. Ibid.
2. Isaiah 53: 5-6; I Timothy 2:5-6; I John 2:1-2; Hebrews 2:9.
3. Treatise on Atonement, p. 74.
4. Ibid., pp. 76-77.
5. As is his custom, however, he names neither.

satisfies the penalty of the law. Since this is true,

it is now just and right for God to acquit as many of the sinful race of Adam, as is consistent with his grand object, which is himself; yet, by no means rendering it unjust for God to punish, to all eternity, as many as is necessary, in order for the satisfying of the same grand object.<sup>1</sup>

Hosea uses a common sense approach in refuting Hopkinsonian claims. If God is infinitely glorious, he says, it is a waste of time for Him to try to enhance that glory. (Again, what does infinite mean?) If it is argued that God is attempting to secure and maintain his splendor, it is to argue that His infinite glory is perishable! To those who say that God's object is to manifest his glory to intelligent beings without reference to its effects, Hosea answers that this is absurd, for no rational being could operate without consideration of the effects of his actions.<sup>2</sup>

Before turning to consider a third theory of atonement, Hosea digresses on the subject of endless punishment. Here he develops an idea hinted at in the Literary Correspondence published in 1799. An idea which was to play an increasingly important part in his later thought. Endless punishment cannot keep a sinner from sinning. Sin and misery are irrevocably tied to each other; to suffer misery is to sin; to sin is to be miserable. Endless punishment

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1. Ibid.; pp. 81-82.

2. Ibid., p. 83.

would fix the delinquents in a situation, in which they could do nothing but sin, to an endless eternity. No moral being can be miserable, as suffering conscious guilt, without sin; therefore, in order for endless misery to be inflicted, endless transgression is necessary.<sup>1</sup>

The final "erroneous" theory of atonement to be considered is that held by the Arminians. This theory grants that Christ's suffering and death was completely efficacious for all men. Adam's transgression and the resultant original sin was wiped out by Christ. Adam and his progeny are now on probation. But unlike Adam before the Fall, man now knows the difference between good and evil. But he also has strong appetites which lead to sin. A "portion of the divine Spirit" is his, however, which assists him in opposing those appetites and overcoming them. Adam had the power as a moral agent to choose holiness and happiness; man now has that same power. Man is capable of repentance and the heavenly Father is willing to forgive.<sup>2</sup>

Hosea considers this position completely inadequate. "The sum of this plan of atonement, made salvation possible unto all men, and certain unto none."<sup>3</sup> He insisted on the certainty of the salvation of all men. Under this system, there is no certainty. If man failed on his first try,

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1. Treatise on Atonement, p. 87.

2. Ibid., p. 91.

3. Ibid.

there is no reason to believe that he will succeed now. There can be no certainty that any of Adam's posterity will achieve salvation.<sup>1</sup> Christ suffered to give man another chance, God revealed himself in the prophets, he sent his Holy Spirit into the world to guide men to truth. All this was done--

but all upon uncertainties! After all, man has it in his power to frustrate the whole plan of grace, and render it abortive! O! ye angels of celestial purity, had ye known this, ye would not have sung on the auspicious birth-day of Emanuel "Great joy, which shall be unto all people."<sup>2</sup>

Ballou was not an Arminian!

Having shown why the usual theories of atonement are inadequate, Ballou then sets forth a system which is designed to show forth the loving kindness of the Father to all His children. First it is necessary to make clear what is meant by atonement. He defines it as reconciliation, or satisfaction. The question then arises: "Who is the unreconciled or dissatisfied party?" Is it God, or is it man? "It is a being unreconciled to truth and justice, which needs reconciliation; and it is a dissatisfied being which needs satisfaction."<sup>3</sup>

To demonstrate that it is man--and not God--who needs

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1. Ibid., p. 94.
  2. Ibid., p. 96.
  3. Ibid., p. 98.

reconciliation, Hosea turns to the story of Adam. Would the first man have hid from God after his transgression if he considered God his friend? Adam's sin produced two errors which have continued in men's minds ever since. First, that God is man's enemy as a result of Adam's sin. Second, that man could reconcile God by his works. The first of these errors is illustrated by Adam's attempt to hide from God; the second, by his attempt to clothe himself by the works of his own hands.<sup>1</sup> With his carnal mind man misunderstands God. He looks on Him as a tyrant who desires vengeance. "A consciousness of sin, without the knowledge of God, represents Deity as angry, and full of vengeance...." This attitude is fully seen in the Scriptures where in many passages man's carnal mind conceives of God as provoked to jealousy and wrath and then pictures Him as calming down and changing His mind toward man.<sup>2</sup> Although Adam changed as a result of his experience, there is no evidence that God changed. God's fatherly interest and love continued. In the cool of the day He clothed Adam in skins and promised him "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head...." God, it should be noticed, cursed not man but the serpent. How, then, could He need reconciliation?<sup>3</sup>

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1. Treatise on Atonement, p. 98.

2. Ibid., p. 102.

3. Ibid., p. 98.

An important argument against the idea that God changed His attitude toward man is the attribute of unchangeability. "To say, that God loved man any less, after transgression, than before, denies his unchangeability; but, to say that man was wanting in love to God, places him in his real character."<sup>1</sup> God foresaw in his infinite wisdom that Adam would sin. It was no surprise to Him. But He continued to love Adam, for, as He is infinite in all his attributes he could not love man at one time and hate him the next.<sup>2</sup>

Because God is unchangeable love, He seeks to win back erring man to Himself. This is the key to the necessity for an atonement. God sent Christ to renew man's love to Himself. Christ's death is the result of God's love to man and not the cause. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish but have everlasting life."<sup>3</sup> This passage demonstrates that "what Christ did for sinners, was a consequence of God's love to them."<sup>4</sup> "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."<sup>5</sup> This demonstrates that the idea that Christ was a proxy in whom the world was tried and

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1. Ibid.; p. 99.

2. Ibid.; p. 100.

3. John 3:16.

4. Treatise on Atonement, p. 99.

5. John 3:17.

condemned, and in whom man suffered as a penalty for transgression, --is wrong. God's purpose in sending Christ into the world "was the salvation of the sinner, and not for the removing of any dissatisfaction in himself" towards mankind.<sup>1</sup> Hosea piles up his texts in order to prove his point,<sup>2</sup> and sings a paean of praise to the Father for His love.

What an infinite difference there is between the All-gracious and Merciful, and his lost and bewildered creatures? He, all glorious, without a spot in the whole infinitude of his nature; all lovely, without exception, and loving, without partiality. Who can tell the thousandth part of his love to his offspring?<sup>3</sup>

Hosea believed that the theory of atonement held by the individual had practical consequences in life. The most abominable actions of men have stemmed from a mistaken notion of the Deity. Persecution, among other crimes, has resulted from the belief that God is an enemy of wicked men. If Christians believed God loved and had compassion for the ignorant and for those who have strayed, how different would be their actions toward their fellows!<sup>4</sup>

What is the nature of the Mediator who performs atonement? Here Hosea's unitarian ideas come to the fore. His views on the trinity have been reserved for this place, al-

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1. Treatise on Atonement, p. 99.
  2. E.g., Romans 5:8; I John 4:9, 10, 19.
  3. Treatise on Atonement, p. 102.
  4. Ibid., pp. 103-104.

though he himself included them in his discussion of the various erroneous theories of atonement. It is interesting to note that in "A Letter to the Reader" which serves as an introduction to the work, Ballou writes that he will not attempt a full refutation of the doctrine of the trinity-- "as I think that has frequently been done, and well done."<sup>1</sup> He probably refers to Ethan Allen's Reason the Only Oracle of Man and Thomas Paine's Age of Reason. He will touch on the trinity only where the problem bears on his theory of the Mediator.<sup>2</sup>

Hosea's approach to the dogma of the trinity is direct and unsubtle. The trinity does not make sense; it is not reasonable. But, for the sake of argument, he will admit that Jesus is a member of the trinity. If this is the case then Christ, as the son of God,

is the son of himself, and is his own father; that he is no more the Son of God, than God is his son! To say, of two persons, exactly of the same age, that one of them is a real son of the other, is to confound good sense. If Jesus Christ was really God, it must be argued, that God really died! Again, if the Godhead consists of three distinct persons, and each of those persons is infinite, the Whole Godhead amounts to the amazing sum of infinity, multiplied by three! If it is said, that neither of these three persons alone is infinite, I say, the three together, with the addition of a million more such, would not make an infinite being.<sup>3</sup>

Having dismissed the trinitarian dogma as completely

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1. Ibid., p. vii.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Ibid., p. 93.

unreasonable, Ballou presents a unitarian, or better, an Arian view of Christ. He bases his arguments squarely on the Scriptures in order to prove that the Mediator is "a created dependent being."<sup>1</sup> The dependence of the Mediator on God is shown by his frequent prayers to God. He recognized the Father as a Superior: "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do" (John 5:19). He acknowledged his Father as superior in wisdom: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matthew 24:36).<sup>2</sup> And he goes on to bolster his belief that the Mediator is inferior to the Father with a whole series of texts from the Old and New Testaments.<sup>3</sup>

Christ as Mediator is the representative of God. Just as a minister of the president of the United States at a foreign court is in effect "the power that sent him" so Christ is, in effect, representative of God on earth in the task assigned him.<sup>4</sup> When his mission is accomplished he will deliver up his kingdom to the Father that God may be "all in all."<sup>5</sup> Hosea tries to be honest with the Scriptures. He does not deny that in places Christ is

1. Treatise on Atonement, p. 108.

2. He says Mark 13:32 is still more explicit on this point. Ibid.

3. Ibid.; p. 109.

4. Ibid., p. 110.

5. I Corinthians 15:24-28, Ibid., p. 112.

referred to as "God, Lord, and ever-lasting Father," and, he says, he does not deny the propriety of such appèlations, but he does deny that when applied to Christ they equate him with the self-existent Jehovah.<sup>1</sup> He notes that St. Paul could not have known Christ as "essentially God," for he specifically calls the Mediator "man."<sup>2</sup> This would have been improper, to say the least, if Paul had known him to be otherwise.<sup>3</sup>

Is Christ then just a man? Yes--but. Hosea would consider Jesus "no more than equal with men" were it not that God "anointed him above his fellows."<sup>4</sup> But Christ, he makes clear, was dependent on God for this exaltation.<sup>5</sup> As usual, Hosea is willing to consider the arguments of his opponents:

It will be said, Christ taught the people, that he and his Father were one. I grant he did, and if that proves him to be essentially God, the argument must run farther than the objector would wish to have it. See St. John xvii. ii, Christ prays that his disciples may be one, even as he and the Father are one.<sup>6</sup>

So it is obvious that the oneness of the Father and the Son is not a metaphysical oneness but a "union and agreement in the great work which he has undertaken...."<sup>7</sup>

1. Ibid., p. 109.
2. I Timothy 2:5.
3. Treatise on Atonement, p. 112.
4. Philippians 2:9.
5. Treatise on Atonement, p. 110.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.

Christ's anointment "above his fellows" truly exalts him in Hosea's eyes. By no stretch of the imagination was Hosea a Unitarian in the modern sense. His christological position was more Arian than Unitarian. Christ is, as the Scripture says, the "image of the invisible God, and the first born of every creature." It is a pre-existent Christ in which Hosea believes.

...The Mediator is the first human soul which was created, as Adam was the first man that was formed; and...he is, in Spirit, the Father of every human creature, as much as Adam is in the flesh. Therefore, Christ saith, as it is written, "Behold I and the children that thou hast given me."<sup>1</sup>

Even though Hosea divorces Christ from the trinity, this does not lessen his power to save mankind. From the many texts he has quoted there is no doubt, he writes, that the Mediator has the power and ability to perform the task of atonement.<sup>2</sup> It is sure that man needs the saving work of

1. Ibid., p. 111.

2. Ibid., p. 113. It is interesting to read the sermon Ballou preached this same year, 1805, at the ordination of his friend Abner Kneeland. It is indeed an exalted picture of Christ which he gives. Although he stresses his subordination to the Father, he still goes to the length of calling him "the true God and eternal life." He makes a strong Scriptural case for Christ as the "head" of mankind. "Could it be proved, that a single individual of the human family did not belong to Christ, there could be no propriety in persuading such a person to believe in Christ as Redeemer, or of exhorting him to yield obedience to his commands." See A Sermon delivered at Langdon, (N.H.), on the 30th Oct., 1805, at the Ordination of the Rev. Abner Kneeland, to the Pastoral Care and Charge of the Universalian Church and Society in said Town (Randolph, Vermont: 1806), pp. 9-11, 13.

Christ, for he himself is not capable of performing the task of reconciliation with God. If the job of reconciling "all things" to God was given to Christ, "it is not reasonable to believe we have power to perform it ourselves."<sup>1</sup>

What is the nature of this atonement performed by Christ? Before proceeding to this point Hosea tells what it is not. Christians in general are, like the Pharisees of old, so bound to the letter of the law that there is a veil before their minds. They believe that the temporal death of Christ was the atoning act of freeing them from sin; it is the literal blood which they believe has efficacy to cleanse from guilt. This is sheer carnal mindedness!<sup>2</sup> The apostles, on the other hand, were devoted to the spirit, not to the letter. When Christ said "except ye eat my flesh, and drink my blood, ye have no life in you," did he mean this to be taken literally? If so, says Hosea with his usual debater's skill, what would the orthodox Christian make of these words: "The flesh profiteth nothing; the words which I speak, they are spirit and they are life." The church has been led into this "wilderness of the letter" by "an hireling priesthood...."<sup>3</sup> Hosea here reveals a prejudice against the "priests" of orthodoxy which plays a part in his preaching throughout his life. The

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1. Treatise on Atonement, p. 113.

2. Ibid., p. 117.

3. Ibid., p. 118.

clergy have misguided the people.

To escape this carnal mindedness the Christian must take Christ's death figuratively to represent the death of the letter of the law. The death of Christ's body allows for the destruction of the letter and the releasing of the spirit.<sup>1</sup>

The shedding of the blood of Christ has no meaning. What then is atonement? It is reconciliation, a renewal of love. When the soul is freed from the law of sin, it embraces the law of the spirit of life in Christ--which is love.

...It is by the force and power of the law of love, in Christ, that the soul is delivered from the government of the law of sin; the process of this deliverance is the work of atonement, or reconciliation.<sup>2</sup>

This power causes man to hate sin and to love holiness. This spirit of love is the logos which was made flesh and dwelt among men. This logos was hidden behind the letter of the law and the "cabalistical" allegories of the prophets. But it broke forth in Christ.<sup>3</sup>

It is only love that can overcome sin.

There is nothing in heaven above, nor in the earth beneath, that can do away sin, but love; and we have reason to be eternally thankful, that love is stronger than death, that many waters cannot quench it, nor the floods drown it; that it hath power to remove the moral

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid., p. 115.
3. Ibid.

maladies of mankind, and to make us free from the law of sin and death, to reconcile us to God, and to wash us pure, in the blood, or life, of the everlasting covenant. O love, thou great Physician of souls, what a work hast thou undertaken! All souls are thy patients; prosperous be thy labors, thou bruiser of the head of carnal mind.<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting that Hosea was able through his conception of the power of love to break away from the exclusive Christian outlook. In this, the seeds of modern Universalism lay: this power of love is not exclusively Christian. The power of atonement, "the divine grace of reconciliation," can be communicated to those who have never heard the name of Jesus. This love is no doubt abundant among those who have been taught that Christianity is an imposture. It can not be restricted to "names, sects, denominations, people or kingdoms."<sup>2</sup> It will be seen that such a conception was absolutely necessary if Hosea was to believe in the salvation of all mankind. He, however, was by no means giving up Christ. Only through this "second Adam" can this rejuvenating love be felt.<sup>3</sup> In other words, Christ as love is at work in the hearts of those who have never heard his name; yea, even in the hearts of those who have heard it and reject it!

Hosea Ballou, despite his high estimation of, and his

1. Ibid., p. 119.

2. Treatise on Atonement, pp. 119-120.

3. Ibid., p. 120.

exultation in, the love of Christ, was a practical man. He had only to look about him to realize that experientially the atonement of Christ did not perform miracles. It was never intended to "perform impossibilities" in men's lives. One cannot expect it to make men agree and live in peace with each other if they are destitute of the love which is an essential part of it.

...It is calculated and designed to inspire the mind with that love which will produce peace in Jesus. As atonement is a complete fulfilment of the law of the heavenly man, it causes its recipient to love God and his fellow creatures, in as great a degree as he partakes of its nature.<sup>1</sup>

He compares the soul when atoning grace is absent to the land suffering drought. Streams and springs are dried up, the green fields have lost their attraction. The soul without "the rain of righteousness" is barren. But atoning grace makes all the difference. "The soul is like the earth that drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it...." All is revived, and like a garden "well watered and cultivated" the soul produces precious fruit.<sup>2</sup>

The possession of atoning grace on the part of an individual can be determined by a simple test. Ask him if he loves God, and why? If he answers that he loves God because it is his duty and he fears God's rod, he does not possess atoning grace. He does not, cannot really love God. His

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1. Ibid.; pp. 126-127.

2. Ibid., p. 127.

profession of Christianity and his performance of the endless round of church duties amounts to nothing. He lacks the one important element: love.<sup>1</sup>

Ask an individual why he loves God. If he answers that he loves Him because of "the divine beauties and excellencies" he beholds in the Deity, that he delights in obedience to God's commands which are "joyous and not grievous,"--here is the presence of atoning grace. It matters not to what denomination he belongs. If he regards the Deity in this manner, his is the benefit of the atonement.<sup>2</sup>

Atoning grace produces all which the bible means by conviction, or being born of the Spirit; it brings the mind from under the power and constitution of the earthly Adam, to live by faith on the Son of God and to be ruled and governed, even in this life, in a great measure, by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. It opens eternal things to our view and contemplation; it brings heaven into the soul, and clothes the man in his right mind; it inspires the soul with divine meekness and boldness, at the same time. It was this that enabled the apostles of our Lord to preach the gospel, in defiance of the rage of their enemies, and gave them immortal consolations in their sufferings for the cause of truth. It causes the christian to love all God's rational creatures, and to wish their saving knowledge of the truth; it produces good works in their purity, and all the morality worth the name is founded on it. Its divine power is stronger than any possible opposition, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it; it opens a door of everlasting hope, and conducts the soul, by way of the cross, to immortality and eternal life. This dispensation of atonement is manifested through Christ,

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1. Ibid., p. 129.

2. Treatise on Atonement, p. 130.

for the reconciliation of all things to God, in his glorious kingdom of holiness and happiness.<sup>1</sup>

The question arises as to the dispensation of God's grace to mankind. Hosea's argument is weak at this point. He does not adequately explain why God is partial in this matter.

The divine efficacy of this atoning grace may be communicated to the most vile and profligate person in the world, and stop him in his full career of wickedness: it can show the sinner, in a moment, the deformity of sin, and the beauty of holiness. In other instances, the morally virtuous are led a long time in concern and great trouble, about themselves, before they find him of whom Moses and the prophets did write.<sup>2</sup>

His only recourse is to fall back on the usual answer of Christian piety: God "does all things well, and in the best time and way...."<sup>3</sup>

Having discussed the nature of atonement, Hosea turns to the consequences: holiness and happiness to all mankind. The basis for his belief in the doctrine of Universal salvation he summarizes in three points: 1) Man was created by God in Christ. In other words, originally man was possessed of a heavenly nature. 2) God later reduced man to a state of flesh and blood, in which state he became subject to the "law of sin," the governing principles of the fleshly man.<sup>4</sup>

1. Ibid., pp. 130-131.

2. Ibid., pp. 125-126.

3. Ibid., p.126

4. "If sin and guilt had never been introduced into our system, the plan of grace, by atonement, could never have been exhibited." Ibid., p. 61.

3) God has revealed his intention of returning man to his heavenly status "forever to be under the governing power of the law of the heavenly constitution."<sup>1</sup>

Before proceeding, Hosea feels compelled to take note of the theory put forth by some that a portion of mankind must suffer in order to make the saints in heaven more happy. He is revolted by such an argument.

...What reason can be given for such an idea? How do we look on a person, in this world, who manifests joy and happiness in the misery of one of his fellow creatures? Do we say, he manifests a godlike disposition? Surely no. From whence came charity; from heaven, or hell?<sup>2</sup>

If any portion of the human race were to be endlessly miserable, the rest of men would be so too by their knowledge of the condition of their brothers. A "well disposed" man cannot bear the suffering of others without suffering himself. No one in the world has exhibited more of this compassion than Jesus.<sup>3</sup>

The objection made by some to the effect that an all-

1. Ibid., pp. 130-132.

2. Ibid., p. 134.

3. Treatise on Atonement, p. 171. Foster, New England Theology, p. 323, believes that Ballou misrepresents the Hopkinsians in his discussion of the "supposition that eternal punishment is necessary to the greatest amount of happiness." He finds Ballou's statement of the Hopkinsian positions "are very objectionable." Foster probably did not take into consideration the fact that Ballou is answering the arguments not only of the eminent theologians of that school, but also those of the country-town Hopkinsian who no doubt stated the case quite differently than the masters.

merciful God cannot be at the same time a God of justice is not valid. There is no scriptural proof of this proposition; and, furthermore, there is nothing self-evident about the maxim usually quoted, "A God all mercy is a God unjust."<sup>1</sup>

At this point Hosea develops an idea that, a few years hence, is to play an important part in disrupting the peace of the Universalist denomination. Some object that there is no alteration in the lives of many sinful men as they leave this world. This is seen every day. Hosea admits this would be a powerful argument against Universal salvation--if it could be proved. But no Scripture can be cited in proof. Furthermore, if the objector is correct, this argument could also be used to show that "all our christian people must remain eternally as unsanctified, as they are in this world of infirmities."<sup>2</sup> Hosea believed strongly that there was an alteration of the person at death. The soul will be enlightened and converted from sin to holiness. God, at the entrance of the soul to eternal life, will purify it.<sup>3</sup>

Hosea is aware that there is a huge stumbling block between the Christians of his day and the doctrine of Universal salvation. So he enters on a long discussion on the meaning of words in the Scripture usually translated "everlasting,"

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1. Treatise on Atonement, p. 137.  
 2. Ibid., pp. 137-138.  
 3. Ibid., p. 153.

"forever," etc.<sup>1</sup> He cites case after case from the Bible to show that these words were used in reference to many things which have not proved to be "everlasting." He attempts to show that these same words used in connection with suffering and misery do not mean what divines have interpreted them to mean. He then turns to consider the use of the word "fire," believing that in the New Testament it is used metaphorically.<sup>2</sup> While his arguments are not always convincing to the modern mind, Hosea at least recognizes the important truth that many of the passages used by his opponents as references to an after-life really refer to this earthly state. His approach has all ready been considered in the discussion of his Notes on the Parables. This "fire" purges man of his carnal nature and reveals the basic heavenly strain in his makeup. the "power of the gospel grace to remove all excrescences from our hearts and con-

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1. Ibid., pp. 140ff. He feels that it is not necessary to "labor this point largely, for it has been done faithfully by an able author, whose works are among us." If Hosea means by "among us," Universalists, he is referring to Elhanan Winchester who discusses "unlimited words" in The Universal Restoration: Exhibited in Four Dialogues between a Minister and His Friend; comprehending the Substance of Several Real Conversations which the Author had with Various Persons both in America and Europe on that Interesting Subject: Chiefly designed fully to state, and fairly to Answer the most Common Objections that are brought against it, from the Scriptures (Philadelphia: 1843); especially "Dialogue One," pp. 5-17. He, however, may be referring to Charles Chauncy's Salvation of All Men.

2. Treatise on Atonement, pp. 142ff.

sciences" is demonstrated by the figure of the wheat and the chaff.<sup>1</sup>

Wheat, though concealed from vulgar eyes, by chaff, yet, by the experienced, in the raising of grain, is perfectly well known; and we do not condemn wheat and throw it away, because nature so ordered, that it is encompassed with chaff while growing in the field. So man is not to be valued the less by the wisdom of God, on account of the imperfections of his earthly nature. And we may, with great propriety, argue, that as chaff is necessary for the growth of wheat, until it comes to maturity; so are all the imperfections of man, viewed by divine wisdom, until the creature comes to that experience, which was intended in a state of imperfection.<sup>2</sup>

Hosea never overlooked the sins of men and the corruption that they are subject to. But the darker side of man's life did not blind his eyes to man's heavenly, divine potentialities. He believed that men come to the knowledge of moral principles by degrees. It is man's nature to seek happiness on these principles.<sup>3</sup>

Hosea reiterates his belief that men sin because they think they will gain happiness by so doing. But as soon as they discover their mistake, they will follow the dictates of truth. Happiness is man's main goal and he will seek it by the most direct means.<sup>4</sup> If he is under the mistaken notion that sin will produce happiness, he will sin. If he realizes that the path of virtue will "happify" him, he will

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1. Ibid.; pp. 148-149.

2. Ibid.; p. 148.

3. Ibid.; p. 169.

4. Ibid., p. 176.

be virtuous. "I wish the reader to keep in mind, that I hold sin and misery inseparably connected, and holiness and happiness so, likewise."<sup>1</sup>

In this last section of his Treatise Hosea alternates between the Scriptural argument for Universalism and the benevolent nature of God. But when all is said and done, he cannot condemn the reader who feels that despite all he has written the doctrine of universal holiness and happiness cannot be true. "The time has been, when I believed as little of the doctrine as you now do; I never adopted the belief of universal holiness and happiness out of choice, but from the force of real or supposed evidence."<sup>2</sup> He realizes the opposition that those who profess the new belief will face. Some will be excommunicated, others will be avoided by their neighbors, others will be violently opposed, there will be division in households.<sup>3</sup> But what are these things compared to the blessedness which comes from the belief in the goodness of God and the Savior?

The fulness of times will come, and the times of the restitution of all things will be accomplished. Then shall truth be victorious, and all error flee to eternal night. Then shall universal songs of honor be sung to the praise of him who liveth forever and ever. All death, sorrow and crying, shall be done away; pains and disorders shall be no more felt, temptations no more trouble the lovers of God, nor sin poison the human heart. The blessed hand of the once crucified

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1. Ibid.; p. 171.

2. Ibid., p. 214.

3. Treatise on Atonement, p. 204.

shall wipe tears from off all faces. O, transporting thought! Then shall the blessed Savior see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied, when, through his mediation, universal nature shall be brought in perfect union with truth and holiness, and the spirit of God fills all rational beings. Then shall the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which maketh free from the law of sin, become the governing principle of the whole man once made subject to vanity, once intrahed in darkness, sin and misery; but then, delivered from the bondage of corruption, and restored to perfect reconciliation to God, in the heavenly Adam. Then shall the great object of the Savior's mission be accomplished. Then shall the question be asked, O death, where is thy sting? But death shall not be, to give the answer. And, O grave, where is thy victory? But the boaster shall be silent. The Son shall deliver up the kingdom to God the Father; the eternal radiance shall smile, and God shall be All in All.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 216.

## CHAPTER X

### PORTSMOUTH

In the early years of the nineteenth century Portsmouth was the largest town in New Hampshire. Universalism had first been brought there by John Murray. One of his disciples, Noah Parker, was the first resident preacher. With the death of Parker in 1787 the Universalists were destitute of a preacher until 1793 when they succeeded in calling George Richards, a teacher who had substituted for Murray in the Boston pulpit when the latter was off preaching in Gloucester. On Murray's permanent removal to Boston, Richards was free to accept a call to Portsmouth.<sup>1</sup> With a permanent minister among them the Universalists organized and were officially incorporated by act of the General Court of New Hampshire in June, 1793.<sup>2</sup> When the society began its corporate life it had only eighteen members.<sup>3</sup> But by 1807 it was in the position to build a meeting house on newly purchased land.<sup>4</sup> This move proved to be unwise, however, for the society was not able to meet Richards' full salary

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1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 311.
  2. Records of the Universalist Society at Portsmouth. Book I (1793-1852), pp. 1-4
  3. Ibid., pp. 13-14.
  4. Minutes of Meeting, January 26, 1807. Ibid., p. 71

of \$500.00 for the next few years,<sup>1</sup> until finally he resigned<sup>2</sup> to move to Philadelphia.

With this financial cloud over its head, the Portsmouth society voted a committee "to go or send to Salem to confer with the ministers which may be assembled there at the Instalation [sic] of Mr. Turner in June next, on the subject."<sup>3</sup> Hosea Ballou was in Salem on the appointed day, delivering the sermon at his friend's installation.<sup>4</sup> The sermon, as printed, is not very impressive, but obviously the committee from Portsmouth was much taken with the tall, imposing preacher of thirty-eight years. It invited him to fill the pulpit at Portsmouth for several Sundays. The Portsmouth people agreed with the opinion of their committee and voted to

offer him the sum of Eight hundred dollars p<sup>r</sup> year together with the contribution money, as an inducement for him to settle with us as our Minister, the expenses of removing his family &c from Barnard to this place to be paid by the Society.<sup>5</sup>

It is interesting that the society offered to pay a salary of \$800.00 in the light of the trouble it had in meeting Richards' salary of \$500.00. Hosea may have known

1. Ibid., pp. 78, 83.

2. Minutes of Meeting, April 26, 1809. Ibid., p. 85.

3. Minutes of Meeting, April 26, 1809. Ibid.

4. Hosea Ballou, A Discourse delivered at Salem, June 22nd, 1809, at the Installation of the Rev. Edward Turner over the First Universal Society in said place (Salem: 1809).

5. Records of the Universalist Society at Portsmouth. Book One (1793-1852), p. 87.

of this trouble, for it appears that he insisted that one-quarter of his salary be paid in advance, and that he be given the rest punctually in quarterly payments. This the society voted to do.<sup>1</sup> His conditions having been voted, Hosea wrote the society a letter:

To the Universalian Society in Portsmouth

Dear Brethren in Christ,

With deep concern I have taken into consideration your friendly call bearing date August 21st, 1809 for my settlement with you in the ministry. Many and important have been the objections to my removal from those United Societies, with whom I have been happily connected almost seven years, without experiencing the smallest disaffection either with the body at large, or even an Individual. But such are the ways of divine Providence and Grace, that human Wisdom seems to have nothing to do, but submit to the economy and wisdom of God. It having pleased the great head of the Church to put it into the hearts of my friends in Vermont to grant their consent to your request, as you have seen by their answer; it devolves on me to decide the main question, whither [sic] I consent to your invitation or not. From the first of my having this subject under consideration I have invariably considered it of that importance, which rendered it necessary to watch with profound attention whatever might transpire in divine Providence to assist in a correct decision. In this way I have come to the conclusion that the Call from the Society is a Call from my divine Master, and in obedience to him, I joyfully accept it; Altho' I am sensible that my cares are enlarged by it; yet, I pray God that his Grace may be sufficient for me.

Yours in Christian love  
Hosea Ballou<sup>c</sup>

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1. Minutes of Meeting, October 9, 1809. Ibid., pp. 89-90.  
2. Letter from Hosea Ballou to the Wardens and Committee of the Universalist Society in Portsmouth. Ibid., pp.90-91.

Hosea moved his wife and five children to Portsmouth<sup>1</sup> to begin his first real settlement over a church. He was installed on November 8, 1809, with Edward Turner preaching the sermon on the text, "Be not thou, therefore, ashamed of the testimony of the Lord."<sup>2</sup> The first few years of Hosea's ministry at Portsmouth were very successful. He preached twice, sometimes three times, on a Sunday,<sup>3</sup> to large congregations.<sup>4</sup>

Shortly after his arrival in town, Hosea visited Dr. Joseph Buckminster,<sup>5</sup> minister of one of the Congregational churches. He expressed the wish that he might have friendly relations with his fellow ministers in Portsmouth.<sup>6</sup> The older man appears to have taken a liking to Hosea, for on December 28 he sent him a note expressing his concern

1. The moving expense was \$36.82. Warden's Account, July 14, 1810, Universalist Society of Portsmouth.

2. II Timothy 1:8a. Edward Turner, A Discourse delivered at the Universal Meeting-House in Portsmouth, N. H., November 8, 1809, at the Installation of the Rev. Hosea Ballou to the Pastoral Charge of the Society in that place (Portsmouth: n.d.).

3. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 315.

4. A Series of Letters between the Rev. Joseph Buckminster, D.D., the Rev. Joseph Walton, A.M., Pastors of Congregational Churches in Portsmouth, N. H., and the Rev. Hosea Ballou (Windsor: 1811), p. 56.

5. Buckminster was father of Joseph Stevens Buckminster, minister of the Brattle Street Church in Cambridge, one of the liberal circle of Boston ministers who inclined toward Unitarianism. The younger Buckminster died in 1812 (the day before his father's death) before the outbreak of the Unitarian controversy. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 317, 326n.

6. Buckminster-Walton-Ballou, Letters, p. 3.

over the danger to his soul that Hosea is incurring by preaching the heresy of Universalism. Believing as he does that he is his brother's keeper, Buckminster must express himself. No matter with what "human ingenuity or plausible and sophistic reasoning" such ideas are preached, he tells Hosea, they have not divine authority.<sup>1</sup> He does not want to dispute with Hosea, believing as he does that no good can come from controversy. When people have made up their minds and party passions are involved, it is not likely that opinions can be changed. Opinions can only be changed by "that still small voice" speaking to one in "retired reflections."<sup>2</sup> He entreats Hosea "in friendship and affection" to reconsider his Universalist preaching and its dangerous consequences to himself and others. He asks him to "anticipate the day of judgment, and realize yourself called upon to give an account of your stewardship."<sup>3</sup>

Hosea appears to have been impressed by Buckminster's concern for him. He answered his letter in terms of warm appreciation, but expresses his belief that Universal salvation can be proved, as well as any doctrine can, from the Bible.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, he takes issue with Buckminster's statement that party passions will prevent a fruitful

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1. Ibid., pp. 4-5.
  2. Ibid., pp. 6-7.
  3. Ibid., p. 7.
  4. Ibid., pp. 11-16.
  5. Ibid., p. 19.

discussion.<sup>1</sup> He believes that "candid and temperate" men can receive "light and edification" by such a process.<sup>2</sup> He urges Buckminster to write down his reasons from Scripture for rejecting the idea of Universal salvation. He promises to give prayerful consideration to them and to acknowledge whatever light he gains, and, by the same token, to state wherein he disagrees.<sup>3</sup>

If Hosea, who relished controversy, thought he could pull Buckminster into a dispute he was mistaken. The old man courteously declined to debate with him. He writes that he is concerned to appear before his Judge with "unstained garments;" for this reason and no other he felt it his duty to warn Ballou against the doctrine he is preaching. He hoped his expressions of concern would lead Hosea to reconsider his positions. Although he must admit that he was tempted to break his resolution and debate with Ballou, he has decided that if the arguments of such giants as Edwards have had no effect, nothing he can say will do any good.<sup>4</sup>

Hosea was not one to give the "opponent" the last word. He answered Buckminster, expressing his joy and supreme confidence in Universalism as the truth.<sup>5</sup> And with an exchange

1. Buckminster-Walton-Ballou, Letters, p. 23.
2. Ibid., p. 24.
3. Ibid., p. 29.
4. Ibid., pp. 31-32.
5. Ibid., pp. 36-37.

of very formal notes<sup>1</sup> the correspondence came to a close.

Hosea, it seems, also impressed one of the other Congregational ministers in town. Old Joseph Walton was pastor of the Independent Congregational Church. He thought highly of Hosea's natural abilities and gifts and was particularly taken with his deferential attitude toward himself.<sup>2</sup> Unlike his Congregational colleague, Buckminster, Walton was perfectly willing to enter into a disputation and trade text for text. His disagreement with Hosea resulted from his attendance at two funeral services conducted by the latter.<sup>3</sup> He was disturbed by Hosea's message on these occasions and wished to admonish him in a friendly manner concerning his errors of omission and commission.<sup>4</sup>

Walton in a letter, November 19, 1810, objected to Hosea's contention that death was designed by God for the good of man. How can such a view be reconciled with such Biblical passages as Romans 6:23—which states that "the wages of sin is death"? He points to the Genesis story of the forbidden fruit to prove that sin is responsible for death and that "sin is the work of the devil...."<sup>5</sup> He accuses Hosea of perverting the Scriptures,<sup>6</sup> and charges him with not having

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1. Ibid., pp. 41-43.

2. Ibid., p. 56.

3. Ibid., p. 44.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., pp. 44-46.

6. Ibid., p. 46.

in either service preached the need for repentance,<sup>1</sup> nor belief in the resurrection of the dead.<sup>2</sup>

This correspondence is of interest, of course, for the light that it sheds on Ballou's thought. He takes up Walton's charges one by one. As to death, he believes it was designed for the good of mankind. It was designed by God, so it must be good, or God must be considered man's enemy.<sup>3</sup>

I view death, sir, as an appointment of God, a friendly messenger, sent to dissolve a tabernacle of corruption and vanity, at the dissolution of which, "the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit unto God who gave it."<sup>4</sup>

He bases his belief that death was designed for man's good on such passages as the words of Paul to the Philippians: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (1:21).

As to Walton's question concerning the lack of a call for repentance in Ballou's sermons, he answers that he believes in the passages which call for repentance as much as he believes in the rest of the Scripture. But he does not subscribe to the idea that preaching repentance has to be accompanied by threats of eternal damnation.

Preaching repentance, I conceive is teaching men and giving them such divine instruction as bring their minds to discover more glorious things than the sins and carnal vanities of this world; which teaching produces a returning of the mind to the things of God and his ever blessed kingdom.--"<sup>5</sup>

1. Buckminster-Walton-Ballou, Letters, p. 47.
2. Ibid., p. 53.
3. Ibid., p. 61.
4. Ibid., p. 64.
5. Ibid., p. 67.

It is not necessary to use the word "repent" in order to preach repentance. A preacher "warmed with the spirit of eternal love" may successfully preach repentance without ever mentioning the word.<sup>1</sup> Repentance is the gift of God and does not depend on "creature agency," i.e. man's actions.<sup>2</sup> Hosea thus squarely places himself against revivalism.

Concerning the resurrection, Hosea has little to say. He affirms his belief in it as it is taught in the Scriptures.<sup>3</sup>

The correspondence continued, taking on a sharpness of tone in places. But the expressions of friendliness and goodwill on the part of both men are strikingly genuine. It is a fair supposition that their friendship surmounted their clash of opinions.

The correspondence between Hosea and the two stalwarts of orthodoxy was published in 1811 by Abner Kneeland. Why Hosea put it into the hands of his friend is not known; it is possible, however, that he had his hands full in preparing for the press new editions of his Notes on the Parables and A Treatise on Atonement.

1: Ibid.  
 2: He justifies this position on the basis of Acts 5:31; 11:18. Ibid., p. 69.  
 3: Ibid., pp. 75-76.

Near the close of 1809 John Murray had been stricken with paralysis. Since he was never to be active again, it was necessary to obtain a colleague for him. Edward Mitchell, like Murray a conservative trinitarian, was persuaded to leave his pastorate in New York to come to Boston. He was settled as Murray's associate in September of 1810.<sup>1</sup> It was noted by some that Hosea Ballou, next to Murray the most prominent preacher in the denomination, did not take part in the installation. An idea of the relationship of Murray and Ballou at this period may be gleaned from a letter of George Richards to Edward Turner:

I do not find that Ballou was called to the ordination of Mitchell and as a late letter from Brother John [Murray] expresses his joy at having got rid of "a Socinian, Deistical, Sadducean Universalist," I have thought whether he did not thus point to a certain neglected individual.<sup>2</sup>

In January, 1811, Hosea joined with Edward Turner of Salem, Thomas Jones of Gloucester, and Abner Kneeland, now of Charlestown, in a new association of Universalist ministers in towns along the coast. Questions for discussion were submitted by the members and assigned as the topics of papers to be read at succeeding meetings.<sup>3</sup> These papers, along with sermons, excerpts from books, etc., were printed in a

1. Eddy, History of Universalism, II, 132.

2. Letter, November 5, 1810 Quoted in The Universalist Quarterly, (New Series) VIII (July, 1871), 272n.

3. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 353.

quarterly published by the group under the title of The Gospel Visitant.<sup>1</sup> It lapsed after one volume was issued.

Among the papers read by Hosea was one on I Peter 3:19-20. From his presentation it is apparent that he, at that time, believed in some form of punishment in a future life.<sup>2</sup> This very passage, reinterpreted a few years later, was to provoke a great dispute in the denomination.

A settled ministry Hosea found to be quite different from circuit riding. There were parish responsibilities not encountered before. Among these was the religious education of the children. In these days before Sunday Schools had been established, resort was had to catechisms. In 1810 Hosea issued one for the use of the children of his church.<sup>3</sup> Being opposed to creeds, he decided that what children should commit to memory should be entirely in the language of the Scriptures.<sup>4</sup> Hosea takes the opportunity to instill into the little ones' minds, among other things, the distinction between the creation of man and his formation in

1. The Gospel Visitant. Being principally Original Tracts on Moral and Religious Subjects: in which an Illustration of the Gospel of God our Saviour is attempted by Arguments drawn from Scripture and Reason. The whole directed to the Promotion of Piety and Morality. By the Gloucester Conference (Charlestown: 1812).

2. Ibid., pp. 220-223.

3. The Child's Scriptural Catechism (7th ed.; Boston: 1837): [First edition, Portsmouth, New Hampshire: 1810.]

4. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 316.

the dust.<sup>1</sup> And, of course, the whole thing has a decided Universalist flavor.<sup>2</sup> Since Hosea insisted that the answers in the catechism must be in Scriptural language, it was not always easy for a child to comprehend their meaning without the help of a good teacher.<sup>3</sup>

In 1812, Hosea published an enlarged edition of the Notes on the Parables.<sup>4</sup> From a pamphlet of eighty pages it grew to a book of 278 pages. His interpretation of the parables has not changed in this second edition. The text of the first edition remains untouched, but added to the end of the exposition of each parable is a section labelled "Illustration." The polemics missing in the first edition make an appearance almost immediately. With all the skill at his command Hosea attempts to show that the parables cannot be used to support the orthodox doctrine of eternal punishment. In context the texts usually used for this purpose prove no such thing.

There are occasional flashes of brilliance in this edition. A good example is a parody of the parable of the Good Samaritan in which Hosea substitutes for the Samaritan

1. Child's Catechism, pp. 5f., 7f.

2. See especially Ibid., pp. 15-18.

3. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 316. Whittemore makes the comment that because of this difficulty of comprehension on the part of the child the booklet was never widely used. Yet, the seventh edition of the catechism was published in Boston twenty-seven years later!

4. Notes on the Parables of the New Testament (2nd ed., enlarged; Portsmouth, New Hampshire: 1812).

"a certain learned divine." The Samaritan of Jesus' parable helps save the man accosted by thieves without asking any questions, but the "learned divine" questions him on his creed, whether he is willing to perish for the glory of God.<sup>1</sup> Obviously the "certain learned divine" is a Hopkinsian!

This edition of the Notes, on the whole, lacks the witty, pungent, homely illustrations of the Treatise on Atonement. Hosea pretty much confines himself to marshalling a legion of texts from both Old and New Testaments to support his allegorical interpretation of the parables. Written before the birth of historical and textual criticism of the Bible, these Notes have nothing to offer to the modern reader and are best consigned to oblivion.

This same year, 1812, Hosea had published a second edition of A Treatise on Atonement.<sup>2</sup> It is simply a reprint of the 1805 edition, without even the addition of a new preface.

These publications were the occasion of an attack on Hosea by George Forrester,<sup>3</sup> a Calvinistic Baptist preacher

1. Ibid., pp. 198-200.

2. A Treatise on Atonement; in which, the Finite Nature of Sin is Argued, its Cause and Consequences as such; the Necessity and Nature of Atonement, and its Glorious Consequences, in the Final Reconciliation of All Men to Holiness and Happiness (2nd ed.; Portsmouth, New Hampshire: 1812).

3. George Forrester, Strictures on Works entitled "Treatise on Atonement," and "Notes on the Parables" (Portsmouth: 1812).

and a teacher in Portsmouth. Forrester did not carry on a serious discussion but resorted to ridicule. Hosea answered his "uncouth invective"<sup>1</sup> in as civil a manner as he could manage in a series of letters under the clever title of An Attempt with a Soft Answer to Turn Away Wrath... The controversy ended with a brief reply by Forrester.<sup>2</sup>

The same year found Hosea engaged in a much more important controversy--with members of his own church. The contention arose due to the War of 1812. Portsmouth was badly affected by the war, and the Federalist shipowners were strongly opposed to it. The majority of Hosea's church were Democrats (then called Republicans), but there was a sizeable group of wealthier and more influential members who were Federalists.<sup>3</sup> Trouble began when Hosea responded to a call by President Madison for a day of national humiliation and prayer. Although Hosea was a Republican<sup>4</sup> and had decided political opinions, for ministerial reasons he never expressed his views outside the family circle.<sup>5</sup>

1. Hosea Ballou, An Attempt with a Soft Answer to Turn Away Wrath, in Letters addressed to Mr. George Forrester, Calvinist-Baptist Preacher. In Reply to his Strictures on Works entitled "Treatise on Atonement," and "Notes and Illustrations on Parables" (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: 1813), p. 15.

2. George Forrester, Remarks Suggested by Mr. Ballou's Late Publication (Portsmouth: 1813).

3. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 376.

4. "His Universalism and his faith in American Democracy in many points coincided." Safford, Hosea Ballou, p. 107.

5. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 219.

He definitely believed that politics should be kept out of the pulpit.<sup>1</sup> But on the day of humiliation and prayer, his patriotic feeling got the better of him. He preached a forthright, emotional sermon in favor of the President and the war.<sup>2</sup>

Hosea took as his text John 17:36--"If My Kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight." He drew a distinction between the kingdom of Christ which is not of

1. An unfortunate, but, at this distance, humorous incident happened at an ordination service at the General Convention of 1829. The ordination prayer was assigned to the Reverend Joshua Flagg, "a man of strong feelings on political matters...." Flagg was a supporter of General Andrew Jackson who the March before had been inaugurated as President of the United States. Near the close of his ordination prayer, Flagg raised his voice in "ardent supplication" in behalf of Jackson: "And, O Lord, wilt thou remember thy servant, the President of these United States, elevated to his high position by the free-will suffrages of his grateful fellow-citizens. Wilt thou bless him, O Lord, and crown him with success; and may he be enabled to put down all his political foes, as he put down the British hosts at the battle of New Orleans." Thomas Whittemore wrote of the incident; "Such a petition, so out of place at any time in public worship, but more especially as a part of an ordaining prayer, sent a shudder over the assembly, especially the preachers; and Mr. Ballou felt it his duty to administer a faithful rebuke to Mr. Flagg, as they walked away from the church at the close of the service." Whittemore, Life of Ballou, III, 58.

2. Hosea Ballou, A Sermon, delivered at Portsmouth, N. H., Appropriate to the Occasion of a Day of Humiliation and Prayer, Recommended by the President of the United States on the 20th of August, 1812. Published by the Request of the Wardens (Portsmouth, n.d.). [Pagination referred to in this dissertation is that of a typed copy in the possession of the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Portsmouth and in the Universalist Historical Society Library, Crane Theological School, Tufts University.]

this world, and so does not use force to gain its ends, and the kingdom of this world, where force is sometimes a necessary expedient. Despite persecution the early Christians had propagated the gospel; but the church fell when Christianity was recognized by Constantine. From that

fatal moment...though an overflowing flood of Christian profession succeeded to cover the Roman provinces, an undulating tide of pagan superstitions found its way into the vitals of the church; and, laying hold of the civil sword, has set up and maintained, for ages, the kingdom of antichrist.<sup>1</sup>

Although the church may not use force, it is permissible to the civil government--not in an unjust war but "in the necessary defence of any of its rights which might possibly be infringed."<sup>2</sup> He justifies the lately declared war with several examples from the Old Testament. Force may be used in defence of the individual, national rights and independence, in defence of property "against the depredations of wanton, unprincipled plunderers."<sup>3</sup>

This labelling of the Mother Country as "unprincipled plunderers" did not sit well with the monied Federalists in the congregation; nor did his emotional defence of the President against the "abundance of contumely, which has appeared in the public prints, designed to destroy public confidence in our chief magistrate."<sup>4</sup> Hosea fumes against

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1. Ibid.; p. 1.
  2. Ibid.; p. 2.
  3. Ibid.; pp. 2-5.
  4. Ibid.; pp. 6-7.

the "outrage" the British have perpetrated on American citizens and quotes at length inflammatory passages from the President's message on the subject of British impressment of American seamen.<sup>1</sup> He calls for full support of the war, for justice is on the side of America and God will not fail to support the side of justice.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the unrest in the church caused by Hosea's sermon, it was published "by Request of the Wardens."<sup>3</sup> It is safe to assume that at least the majority of the wardens of the church were Republicans! The newspapers of the town carried reports of the sermon. Depending on their party affiliation, they praised or denounced it, but no attempt was made to refute his arguments. "...The opponents of the war described it as an illiterate performance, and found fault with the metaphors and phraseology."<sup>4</sup>

During the course of the next winter the anti-administration party in Portsmouth formed the "Washington Benevolent Society," using the name of the beloved Father of the country as a rallying point against Madison. Hosea, who did not approve of this tactic, was on the sidewalk one day when the Society staged a parade. Asked what he thought of the Washington Benevolent Society, he replied that it

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1. Ibid., p. 7.

2. Ibid., p. 10.

3. Ibid., p. 1.

4. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 379.

reminded him of a passage of Scripture. Asked which passage he meant, he answered by quoting the verses. "In that day seven women shall take hold of one man saying, 'We will eat our own bread and wear our own apparel, only let us be called by thy name to take away our reproach.'<sup>1</sup> The report of this incident did not help to endear Hosea to the disaffected members of his church.

The opposition to Hosea among the anti-war party came to a head at the annual meeting of the church the following June. The records of the society reveal that it was having trouble paying the debt incurred by the building of the new meeting house. Despite this financial trouble the annual meeting of June 21, 1813, voted to set Hosea's salary at the usual \$800.00 for the ensuing year.<sup>2</sup> But the monied Federalists in the society did not let this opportunity pass without attempting to make trouble for their minister:

Mr Isaac Waldron Jr, Capt Lewis Barnes Mr Mark Simes & others presented to the meeting their protest against their contributing in any way to the support of Mr Ballou & c, which protest was read, & by them requested to be recorded on the records of the society.<sup>3</sup>

But they were not successful; Hosea had the backing that he needed to defeat the opposition:

Voted, That the protest offered by Isaac Waldron Jr,

1. Isaiah 4:1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 379-380.

2. Minutes of Meeting, June 21, 1813. Records of the Universalist Society at Portsmouth. Book One (1793-1852), pp. 104-105.

3. Ibid., p. 105.

Lewis Barnes, Mark Simes & others shall not be entered on the records.<sup>1</sup>

Waldron and Barnes then appear to have attempted to block the assessment on the pews--not wanting their tax money to go to Hosea's salary. Their move, however, "was negatived" by the moderator.<sup>2</sup>

The state of the Portsmouth society was bad--emotional-ly and financially. Animosity to the minister was mirrored by the fact that several persons declined to serve as officers of the society.<sup>3</sup> The financial plight is demonstrated by the fact that the society chose a committee to receive all society money which was in the hands of the wardens, to collect all outstanding debts due, to settle all accounts of the society, and to pay all debts--even if the borrowing of money is necessary.<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to find in the papers of the society that almost \$1000.00 was owed to Mark Simes in 1812, debt and interest on the building of the meeting house.<sup>5</sup> Simes was one of those who had attempted to cut off Hosea's salary. As a result of the trouble, several of the disaffected members withdrew from the society.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the loyalty of the greater part of the congre-

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 104.

4. Ibid., p. 105.

5. Financial Receipts of the Universalist Society at Portsmouth, June, 1812.

6. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 403.

gation, the ministry of Hosea Ballou was under a cloud. But he would not leave town under this pressure, despite the fact that the society had trouble paying his salary. To supplement his income, he turned again to his avocation of teaching. He had a large family to support. Two more daughters had been born to Hosea and Ruth, and another child was on its way. Elmina Ruth was born April 3, 1810,<sup>1</sup> shortly after the Ballous had come to Portsmouth. Clementina was born on July 10, 1812,<sup>2</sup> shortly before the trouble began over Hosea's "war" sermon. Fiducia came into the world on May 1, 1814.<sup>3</sup>

With a wife and seven children (soon eight) it is no wonder that Hosea was hard pressed for money. From the fall of 1813 to the spring of 1815, he conducted a private school. Quarters were readily available in the other side of the double house in which they lived. They were inhabited by a sea captain who was often at sea.<sup>4</sup> Hosea called to Portsmouth to assist him his bright, seventeen-year-old namesake.<sup>5</sup> Hosea Ballou, 2d, his grandnephew, not only taught school for him, but began the study of divinity under his tutorship.<sup>6</sup> This was the beginning of a long and deep association between these two men.

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1. A. Ballou, The Ballous in America, p. 131.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. H. S. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, 2d, pp. 55, 56, 63.

5. Ibid., p. 55.

6. Ibid., p. 56.

## CHAPTER XI

### SALEM

At the end of April, 1815, Hosea received a letter from a committee of the New Universalist Society in Salem. The Salem church had been without a minister ever since Edward Turner had gone to Charlestown in June of the year before. At a special meeting of the society--

it having been intimated that your engagements [sic] where [sic] not so in Portsmouth but that you might receive an invitation from any other Society, under that impression it was Voted unanimously to give you a Call to be our pastor and that a Sallery [sic] of Eight hundred Dollars was Voted for one year---

Hosea's reply encouraged the Salem society to hope that he might be available, but he points out that, with his large family, \$800.00 is scarcely enough to support him in Portsmouth and he knows living costs are higher in Salem. Furthermore,

Should the Society in Salem think proper to find me a comfortable house to live in, and as much firewood as a prudent family would consume, in addition to what has been already generously offered, the conditions would be acceptable. There would be some expence [sic] in moving which the Society would undoubtedly assist in at least.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Letter from Committee of the Universalist Society in Salem to Hosea Ballou, April 26, 1815.

2. Letter from Hosea Ballou to Committee of the Universalist Society in Salem. Portsmouth, April 28, 1815.

The best Salem could do, it informed Hosea, was to offer him \$800.00 a year, paid in quarterly installments as requested, and his moving expenses.<sup>1</sup>

Portsmouth obviously knew nothing of this correspondence between Hosea and Salem, for on May 22 the society held its annual meeting and voted to offer him the usual \$800.00 for the year.<sup>2</sup> When it heard that Salem was attempting to woo its pastor away, it voted to match the Salem offer up to \$900.00.<sup>3</sup> Although this was \$100.00 more than the Salem group had offered, Hosea knew from experience that no matter how much was promised he was not able to collect it. He, therefore, asked for a dismissal from the church. Meanwhile, the Portsmouth society was corresponding with Salem in an attempt to get them to withdraw their invitation to Hosea.<sup>4</sup> This the Salem church refused to do, feeling it had acted properly in its negotiations with Ballou. Furthermore, his services were badly needed in Salem which had been without regular preaching for a long time. "Since Brother Ballou gave his answer and it was made known here a number of

1. Letter from Committee of the Universalist Society in Salem to Hosea Ballou, May 10, 1815.

2. Minutes of Meeting, May 22, 1815. Records of the Universalist Society at Portsmouth. Book One (1793-1852), p. 112.

3. Minutes of Meeting, June 5, 1815. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

4. Letter from Committee of the Universalist Society at Portsmouth to the Universalist Society in Salem, June 5, 1815.

applications have been made for pews in the meeting and the spirits of our friends seem to be revived...."<sup>1</sup>

Salem, of course, had suffered as much as Portsmouth as a result of the late war. The records and papers of the Universalist society there show that Edward Turner had had a very difficult time collecting his salary from the society, many times complaining that he was destitute of money and his family was in need as a result.<sup>2</sup> This bad financial situation was probably responsible for his resignation and removal to Charlestown. Hosea could not have been ignorant of this situation, especially in light of his very close friendship with Turner. His position must have been exceedingly unpleasant at Portsmouth, however, so that he must have thought removal to another church the only answer. Furthermore, Hosea felt a warm spot in his heart for the Salem society. When it had begun building its new meeting house on Rust Street in 1808 he had been chosen to place the cornerstone.<sup>3</sup> When Edward Turner had been installed as its pastor in June of 1809, Hosea had served on the examining

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1. Letter from Committee of the Universalist Society in Salem to the Universalist Society at Portsmouth, July 1, 1815.

2. Letters from Edward Turner to Joseph Newhall, April 5, 1813; January 5, 1814; February 18, 1814.

3. Perley Putnam's Book Which Contains Some of the Earley [sic] Votes and records, of the first Proprietors of the first Universal Society In Salem Massachusetts. 1806. pp. 1, 6.

council and had preached the installation sermon.<sup>1</sup>

The Salem situation offered a challenge. The society was discouraged, having been without a preacher for an entire year. Hosea's name and talents were so well thought of that when the news circulated that he was to be called to fill the pulpit a new interest had been aroused, materializing, as seen above, by the influx of a number of new applications for pews. Also, there was work to be done at nearby Danvers where a newly organized group of Universalists was meeting in a school house. Hosea preached to this new group every fourth Sunday.<sup>2</sup> It was no doubt with great expectation that the Salem society installed its new minister on June 21, 1815.<sup>3</sup>

Impressed with its new minister as the society might be, it was ashamed of the appearance of his family. Hosea and Ruth, as frugal as they were, found it difficult to clothe themselves and their eight children in a manner acceptable in aristocratic Salem and Hosea always hated to go into debt. Some of the more interested members of the Universalist society decided to take action. The result was recorded in the notebook of one of the leading members of the church:

When Mr. Ballou first came here he and his family were

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1. Record of Proceedings of an Ecclesiastical Council assembled in Salem, Massachusetts for purpose of examination of the Rev. Edward Turner....June 21, 1809.

2. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 410.

3. Perley Putnam's Book, p. 58.

destitute of many articles of wearing apparel...or Such articles as to make them appear decent in the Street, and in Order to have our Minister appear as respectable as to dress as others the Society took up a Subscription, and collected Money Enough to furnish Mr. Ballou with many very useful articles for his family, among which Mr and Mrs Ballou were both furnished with Superfine Black Broad Cloth Cloaks & Hat & Bonnet to Correspond, which when worne, they made a much more respectable appearance than when they came, and they also were much improved in their manners before they left us.<sup>1</sup>

Despite this commiseration on the part of the society, Hosea found that when it came time for his quarterly salary installment, he had to ask for it:

Salem, September 6<sup>th</sup>, 1815,

To the Committee of the universalist Society, Brethren, as the means for the support of my family, which were on hand at the time I came to this town, have hetherto [sic] met my expences [sic], I have not called on the Society for any part of my Salary; but those means having now failed, it will be necessary to call for a quarter's Salary next week, when my first quarter will have terminated.

Yours with due respect,  
Hosea Ballou<sup>2</sup>

His financial situation was not much, if any, improved by his move to Salem. The balance of what was owed him by the Portsmouth church was finally paid in May of 1816.<sup>3</sup> Since Hosea never liked to owe money he found it necessary to request a raise in salary when in April, 1816, the Salem church voted

1. Ibid., p. 21.

2. Letter from Hosea Ballou to Nathaniel Frothingham, September 6, 1815.

3. \$168.20. Warden's Accounts of the Universalist Society at Portsmouth, 1816.

to request him to serve another year.<sup>1</sup>

As to the Salary, I am confirmed in the opinion which I formed before I came to this Town, that the sum agreed on for the first year is too small to meet the expenses of my family, in that way of living which convenience and the respectability of the Society require.<sup>2</sup>

Salem voted to offer him \$900.00 for the year to come.<sup>3</sup>

Hosea accepted this figure,<sup>4</sup> but, as will be seen, the society fell further and further behind in its payments to him.

Hosea's years in Salem were filled with controversy. The orthodox elements in the area were quite hostile to the Universalist faith. Samuel Worcester, who played a prominent part in the Unitarian controversy by trading blows with Channing via tracts during 1815, had attacked Universalism from his pulpit at the Tabernacle Church as early as 1811; Hosea, then in Portsmouth, had written an extended review of this sermon,<sup>5</sup> but there is nothing to indicate that the two ever had relations with each other when Hosea moved to Salem.

1. Meeting of the Proprietors and Occupants of Pews of the Universalist Society of Salem, April 29, 1816. Perley Putnam's Book, p. 59.

2. Letter from Hosea Ballou to the Committee of the Universalist Society of Salem, May 21, 1816.

3. Minutes of Meeting, May 26, 1816. Perley Putnam's Book, p. 60.

4. Letter from Hosea Ballou to the Committee of the Universalist Society of Salem, June 15, 1816.

5. [Hosea Ballou], "A Candid Examination and Scriptural Trial of a Sermon entitled God a Rewarder, - delivered at the Tabernacle in Salem, Lord's Day, January 27, [1811]. By Samuel Worcester, A.M. Text, Heb. xi. 6." The Gospel Visitant, I (September, 1811), 65-99.

Hosea, however, did have relations of a sort with the minister of one of the other Congregational churches in town. It appears that he attended a meeting at the church of the Reverend Brown Emerson<sup>1</sup> on a day when the pastor had chosen to preach on one of Hosea's favorite Universalist texts, Romans 5:18. Emerson labored to prove that this text could be applied only to the Elect. Hosea was so incensed at this misuse of the Word of God that he published an open letter to Emerson.<sup>2</sup> The introduction to this pamphlet he addressed, by way of explanation, to his own church and congregation. He writes, he says, because he is

fully convinced that our blessed Redeemer has placed me among you, for the purpose of watching the motions of "spiritual wickedness in high places," and of opposing thereto the spiritual "weapons of our warfare."

. . . . .  
I can give no good account of my divine master, if I shun to meet the enemy in the most direct and open manner.<sup>3</sup>

His Letter is primarily concerned with a defense of the scripturalness of the doctrine of the salvation of all men and a refutation of the idea that Paul in such passages as Romans 5:18 referred only to an elect number. He also rebuffs the calumny that Universalists claim there is no distinction between the righteous and the wicked "through

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1. This inference is gained from Hosea Ballou, A Letter to the Rev. Brown Emerson, Pastor of a Congregational Church and Society in Salem (Salem: 1816), p. 3.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 3.

all the scriptures."<sup>1</sup>

The Reverend Emerson Brown did not condescend to answer Ballou. But one Benjamin Dole, no doubt of his congregation, published an open letter to Hosea, dated November 6, 1816.<sup>2</sup> He styles himself "an illiterate mechanic," and explains that he is writing because Hosea's "pamphlet has fallen below the attention of men of talents and science...."<sup>3</sup> Dole's tone is that which one might expect from "an illiterate mechanic":

I shall not attempt to follow you through all your windings, nor drive you from your false refuges; neither will I endeavor to uncover all your hiding places. When the overflowing flood shall come, it will sweep away your refuge of lies.<sup>4</sup>

Dole writes in defense of Election and the other standard doctrines of Calvinism.

The most extended controversy of this period was with the Rev. John Kelly of Hampstead, New Hampshire, who was alarmed at the rapid spread of Universalism,<sup>5</sup> and what he believed to be its consequent effect on the morals of the people. So alarmed did he become that he found it necessary to publish to the world his Solemn and Important Reasons

1. Ibid., p. 14.

2. Benjamin Dole, A Letter to Mr. Hosea Ballou, Pastor of the Society of Universalists in Salem, occasioned by his Letter to Rev. Brown Emerson (Andover: 1816), p. 3.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p. 4.

5. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 412.

Against becoming a Universalist.<sup>1</sup> Hosea, ever ready to take up the cudgels for the faith, replied to Kelly's charges.<sup>2</sup> Hosea demonstrates his mastery of the polemical style in his refutation of the idea that atonement signifies the pacification of God by the blood of Christ.

Atonement signifies reconciliation. The opinion that God received atonement, or was reconciled to man by Jesus Christ, is nothing but the old doctrine of the mother of harlots, which enabled her clergy to sell indulgences.<sup>3</sup>

Kelly went to press with more of his reasons against becoming a Universalist,<sup>4</sup> and Hosea further vindicated divine benevolence.<sup>5</sup> It was Kelly's intent to stem the tide of Universalism, but as is usually the case in such matters, the publicity given it by his attack only helped to further interest in the "hersey."<sup>6</sup>

1. John Kelly, Solemn and Important Reasons Against becoming a Universalist (Haverhill: 1815).

2. Hosea Ballou, Divine Benevolence: being a Reply to a Pamphlet, entitled, Solemn and Important Reasons Against becoming a Universalist. By John Kelly, A.M. (Boston: 1815).

3. Ibid., p. 24.

4. John Kelly, A. M., Additional Reasons Against Universalism; or Divine Benevolence Vindicated in the Distribution of Future Everlasting Rewards and Punishments. Containing Strictures on the Writings of Hosea Ballou, Pastor of the Universalist Church and Congregation in Salem, Mass. (Haverhill: 1815).

5. Hosea Ballou, Divine Benevolence Further Vindicated: in Reply to a Pamphlet entitled "Additional Reasons Against Universalism," &c. "By John Kelly, A.M., Author of Solemn and Important Reasons Against becoming an Universalist (Salem: 1816).

6. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 412-413.

Not all of Hosea's time was spent writing against the enemy. These years in Salem saw two important series of correspondence with friends. His old friend Abner Kneeland had become disenchanted with the church and Christianity and was being lured into skepticism by the writings of the Deists. He asked Hosea to help him in his unbelief, to give him cogent reasons why the Deists were wrong in their disparagement of the Scripture and the revelation usually associated with it. The correspondence which was carried on by the two was published several years later.<sup>1</sup> On the whole, this correspondence is tedious reading with much space and effort on the part of Hosea spent in trying to keep Kneeland on the subject. As stated above,<sup>2</sup> this correspondence is revealing in regards to Hosea's attitude toward Deism. He believed it had a good catalytic effect on Christians, forcing them to examine the traditional beliefs handed down to them.<sup>3</sup>

He takes his stand squarely on the authority of the Scriptures, expressing complete confidence in the testimony of the apostles,<sup>4</sup> the prophecies of the Old Testament as

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1. Hosea Ballou, A Series of Letters in Defence of Divine Revelation; in Reply to Rev. Abner Kneeland's Serious Inquiry into the Authenticity of the same. To which is added a Religious Correspondence between the Rev. Hosea Ballou and the Rev. Dr. Joseph Buckminster and Rev. Joseph Walton, Pastors of Congregational Churches in Portsmouth, N. H. (Boston: 1820).

2. Cf. Chapter V.

3. H. Ballou, Letters in Defense of Revelation, p. 111.

4. Ibid., p. 23.

having been fulfilled in the coming of Christ,<sup>1</sup> and in the miracles of Christ as proof of the truth of Christianity.<sup>2</sup> It is quite obvious from the repeated references which Hosea make to Paley<sup>3</sup> that he depends heavily on that Anglican divine for his major arguments in countering Kneeland's doubts.<sup>4</sup>

Near the close of the series of letters Kneeland professes to have been convinced by the arguments of his colleague.<sup>5</sup> It is difficult to see why. He justifies himself in this manner:

The question may be still asked, why do you now believe? To which I give this plain and simple answer. It is because, notwithstanding the incredibility of the miracles of Christ, and one of the apostles, and the resurrection, the truth of which, these miracles go to confirm and substantiate; yet, the idea that this story should ever have been told in the manner it is, without having truth for its foundation, in spite of all my incredibility, is still more incredible!<sup>6</sup>

It can be seen that this is a shaky foundation for faith, as it was to prove a few years later when Kneeland was engulfed completely by the tide of infidelity. During the interim, however, Kneeland once again became a servant of the church

1. Ibid., pp. 33f.

2. Ibid., p. 174.

3. E.g. Ibid., pp. 62, 117, 147.

4. William Paley, D.D., A View of the Evidences of Christianity in Three Parts (New York: 1817). [1st English ed., 1794.]

5. H. Ballou, Letters in Defense of Revelation, pp. 149, 161, 182-184.

6. Ibid., p. 182.

and accepted a pastorate in New York.<sup>1</sup>

Of much more significance and lasting consequence was the correspondence between Ballou and his friend Edward Turner of the church at Charlestown on the subject of future punishment. It appeared over the period of a year--April, 1817, to April, 1818--in the Gospel Visitant which had been revived by these two men.<sup>2</sup> It appears that the debate was instigated by Jacob Wood,<sup>3</sup> who recently had been fellow-shipped as a Universalist preacher. Wood carried to Edward Turner a proposal of Hosea's that the two men carry on a "friendly investigation"<sup>4</sup> of the subject of future punishment, with the aim of determining whether it is taught in the Scriptures.<sup>5</sup> The fact that he and Turner are friends and share the same opinions should be in favor of a cool, dispassionate debate.<sup>6</sup> Hosea extends to Turner the privilege of choosing the side he would like to defend.<sup>7</sup>

Turner chose to take the positive side of the question. Always having been inclined to believe in a future punishment, he felt that--with his limited ability at argumenta-

1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 126.

2. [Hosea Ballou and Edward Turner], "Correspondence on the Doctrine of Future Punishment," The Gospel Visitant, II, 115-125, 186-191, 206-211; III, 296-311; 269-279. [The pagination of Volume III is confused. Number 1 continues the pagination of Volume II and reaches page 320. But Number 2 then starts with page 221 and runs to page 284!]

3. Ibid., II, 116.

4. Ibid.,

5. Ibid., p. 115.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., pp. 115-116.

tion--he could best defend the side which he believed.<sup>1</sup> This raises the question as to whether Turner thought that Ballou tended to the other side of the question--that there was no future punishment but that chastisement for sin was limited to this life. Ballou and Turner had been close friends for about twenty-two years, ever since Turner first heard him preach a unitarian sermon at Sturbridge in 1795. Turner would certainly know in what direction Hosea's thoughts were running. From the later actions of Jacob Wood it is safe to assume that he, too, proposed that the two men debate this question because of Hosea's inclination to reject the idea of punishment in a future state.

Such a rejection on the part of Ballou was the logical outcome of his theory of man. If, as he had set forth at length in the Treatise, man's carnal mind is responsible for sin, it is logical to assume that when man's carnality is dissolved at death he will enter the eternal state bearing only the marks of his heavenly nature. The question then was, will this heavenly nature be subjected to punishment to correct the sins of the earthly life? But, also involved was Hosea's presupposition that sin equals misery. He believed that misery could not exist in a state where there was no sin. If there was no sin in an after life,

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1. Ibid., p. 116.

there could be no punishment!

That Hosea had tussled with this problem before, is obvious from his correspondence with Joel Foster which was published in 1799.<sup>1</sup> At that time Ballou was wavering on the question of punishment in the future life. At the time, Foster forced him to take a stand. He declared himself in favor of the theory of a disciplinary future punishment, as opposed to penal suffering. This was probably due to the influence of Chauncy whose book The Salvation of All Men led Hosea to believe that a penal suffering would necessarily be endless--a belief at odds with Universal salvation--whereas, a disciplinary punishment by a loving Father would be limited.

When Hosea wrote his Treatise on Atonement in 1805 he was purposely vague on the subject of future punishment, not as yet having made up his own mind definitely. This was possible in a work which, after all, was designed mainly to refute the idea of endless punishment and other favorite tenets of orthodoxy.

The years following the Treatise show Hosea apparently accepting some form of punishment in the after life. In his exposition of I Peter 3:18-20 before the Gloucester conference of ministers he seemed to accept the idea. And in his

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1. Foster and Ballou, A Literary Correspondence....See Chapter VI. of this dissertation.

review of Samuel Worcester's sermon God a Rewarder<sup>1</sup> he wrote:

As believers in God who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, and as deniers of ENDLESS UNMERCIFUL PUNISHMENT, we do by no means assume to place of judgment, or pretend to say how long God may, for gracious purposes, chasten or punish the rebellious. We believe that chastisement will be exercised by the faithfulness of our merciful father in heaven, as long as sin in us renders it necessary, and no longer.<sup>2</sup>

If there were doubts in Hosea's mind at the beginning of his correspondence with Turner, by its close he had made up his mind once and for all and vigorously defended his position the rest of his long life.

As the debate proceeded Turner took the position that the whole question could be resolved into one point:

If it can be proved from reason and scripture, that "death NECESSARILY produces such a moral change in the mind of the sinner, as to make him at once a willing, obedient and happy subject of the moral kingdom;" then it will follow that the doctrine of future punishment is proved false....<sup>3</sup>

In effect, what Turner was saying was that if Ballou's theory of the heavenly and carnal natures of man could be proved true, there could be no future retribution.

During the course of the debate Hosea took the broad

1. [Hosea Ballou], "A Candid Examination and Scriptural Trial of a Sermon entitled God a Rewarder,- delivered at the Tabernacle in Salem, Lord's Day, January 27, [1811]. By Samuel Worcester, A.M. Text, Heb. xi. 6," The Gospel Visitant, I, 65-99.

2. Ibid., pp. 91-92

3. Gospel Visitant, II, 116.

attitude that belief in a future punishment was not an essential feature of the gospel faith.<sup>1</sup> If the Deity had considered it so He would have put it beyond dispute by proclaiming it from the time of Adam to the present; no such proclamation could be found in the Scriptures.<sup>2</sup>

The climax of the debate was reached when Turner asked Hosea how I Peter 3:18-20 could be reconciled with his new position.<sup>3</sup>

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit; by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which some time were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water.<sup>4</sup>

Turner undoubtedly remembered Hosea's earlier interpretation of this obscure passage as favoring the doctrine of future retribution. Hosea's exegetical skill was sorely tested by Turner's question. But he proved equal to the occasion. As he pondered the problem, reading the passage in context, suddenly "the light broke in" on his mind.<sup>5</sup> The interpretation he came to was quite different from that of "the Papists" who used this text as an argument in favor of a

1. Ibid., pp. 188, 189-191.

2. Ibid., pp. 189-191.

3. Ibid., 209.

4. I Peter 3:18-20.

5. Letter from Hosea Ballou to Thomas Whittemore, November 25, 1829. Whittemore, Modern History of Universalism, p. 438n.

purgatorial state, or the Winchester Universalists who used it in a like manner, or the Protestants in general who interpreted it to refer to the preaching of Christ to the spirits of the people of Noah's day who were in hell in the lifetime of Peter.<sup>1</sup> Hosea's conclusion was vastly different. The passage, he believed, referred by "spirits in prison" to the Gentiles. After the death of Christ his spirit was made manifest to the Gentiles. "Spirits in prison," then, could not be used to justify the theory of a future state of punishment.<sup>2</sup>

The hurdle had been removed from Hosea's path. Having to study the problem of future punishment in order to score as a debater he had convinced himself of the truth of the position he had taken. At last he could see the logical outcome of the presuppositions he had started with so many years before. This correspondence with Turner was another of the turning points of his life. As he wrote to a friend later:

While attending to this correspondence, I became entirely satisfied, that the scriptures begin and end the history of sin in flesh and blood; and that beyond this mortal existence the Bible teaches no other sentient state but that which is called by the blessed name of life and immortality.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Gospel Visitant, III, 297.

2. Ibid., pp. 297ff.

3. Letter from Hosea Ballou to Thomas Whittemore, November 25, 1829. Whittemore, Modern History of Universalism, p. 437-438n.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE CALL TO BOSTON

John Murray was dead. He had passed away in September of 1815<sup>1</sup> leaving a vacuum in Boston. True the First Universalist Society was not without a minister, but Paul Dean was exceedingly ineffective in the eyes of those who wanted to hear an aggressive Universalism preached. Dean was the type of man who preferred to keep his Universalism to himself and to avoid the censure of his orthodox brethren. Furthermore, he was out of step theologically with almost the entire body of the Universalist ministry; he was a Sabellian trinitarian, rather than a unitarian.<sup>2</sup>

Under the circumstances it is not surprising that on the death of Murray a move was made to bring the most prominent Universalist leader in the land to the metropolis of Boston. It was the natural place for Hosea Ballou to preach. The "Second Society of Universalists in the Town

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1. Eddy, History of Universalism, II, 179.

2. "He was a Trinitarian, of the Sabellian school, and of course had a kind of Calvinistic notion of salvation, which I could never comprehend, but on which he was always very sensitive." Charles Hudson, quoted in The Universalist Quarterly, (New Series) VIII (April, 1871), 178n.

of Boston" was incorporated December 13, 1816.<sup>1</sup> It was the hope and intention of the incorporators from the beginning to fill their pulpit with Hosea Ballou.<sup>2</sup>

The Second Society erected a spacious brick building on School Street diagonally across from the present City Hall.<sup>3</sup> The School Street church was an exceedingly plain looking building--it might almost be called "barn-like"--but it was excellent for its purpose: to bring the message of Universal salvation to many people. With a spacious main floor and galleries on three sides, it could seat almost one thousand persons.<sup>4</sup> The new \$22,000 building was dedicated on October 16, 1817,<sup>5</sup> with Thomas Jones of Gloucester preaching the sermon.<sup>6</sup>

The School Street Church extended to Hosea a unanimous call to become its minister<sup>7</sup> at a starting salary of

1. An Account of the Celebration of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Second Society of Universalists, Boston, December 18, 1892 (Boston: Universalist Publishing House, 1893), p. 13.

2. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 419.

3. On the site where stands today the Boston Five Cents Savings Bank, 30-32 School Street, corner of Province Street.

4. Safford, Hosea Ballou, p. 211.

5. The dedication had originally been scheduled for the day before but was postponed because it conflicted with the Brighton cattle show! Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Second Society, p. 15.

6. Thomas Jones, Dedication Sermon, delivered at the New Brick Meeting House, of the Second Society of Universalists in Boston, October 16th, 1817 (Boston: 1817).

7. Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Second Society, p. 18.

\$1,300 a year, plus occasional donations of fuel.<sup>1</sup> He accepted, but not without hard feeling on the part of members of the Salem society with whom he had been about two years. Some felt that he had not acted an honorable part in his negotiations with Boston, accusing him of not being open on the subject.<sup>2</sup> But Hosea must have felt a move was imperative, not only because of the great advantage of a pulpit in Boston, but because his financial condition must have been very poor. When he left Salem the Standing Committee gave him two notes for money owed him, amounting to \$660.00.<sup>3</sup> Although his higher Boston salary allowed his large family to live--for the first time--comfortably, Hosea was anxious that the money owed him be paid so that he could help his son Hosea Faxon who was now married<sup>4</sup> and striking

1. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 105. Safford gives the figure as \$2,000. Hosea Ballou, p. 268.

2. According to Perley Putnam, a short time before Hosea left Salem for Boston he asked the Salem society for permission to visit a friend in Vermont. But, instead of going to Vermont, he preached for the Second Society in Boston and agreed to become its minister when the new meeting house was finished. Shortly after it was rumored about Salem that he was to leave for Boston. Some of his Salem parishioners inquired if the rumor were true. Hosea replied that he understood that the Boston society was to "make overtures to him" but he did not know if he would accept their offer. The persons who asked him had all ready heard that he had accepted the Boston offer and that a house had been rented for him by the society. The people of the Salem church would not have minded him moving to Boston "if Mr. Ballou had behaved honorable and told the truth." Perley Putnam's Book, p. 18.

3. Ibid., pp. 18, 21.

4. January 1, 1817 A. Ballou, The Ballous in America, pp. 131, 325.

out on his own in the wilderness of western Massachusetts. He felt very strongly on this subject and pleaded with Salem for the money owed him.

Brethren, I am in great want of some assistance. My oldest son is in a new country, has a family and nothing but his hands to depend on for support. I greatly desire to help him. I am persuaded that you will so far enter into my feelings as to assist me to one hundred dollars, at least, by the first of September next. Your affectionate and faithful Servant, Hosea Ballou.<sup>1</sup>

This letter to the clerk of the Salem society, written nine months after his removal from Salem, was not given the courtesy of a reply. More than a year later he writes again.

Brother Newel [sic],

It is now going on nearly twelve months since I stated in a letter to the Clerk of your Society the necessity that my family was in for want of what is due me from the Society in Salem--to which statement I have never received any reply. In that communication I requested that the Society would be so good as to accomodate me with an hundred dollars by the first of September last, as my necessity for the money was very pressing.

I will not undertake to make you acquainted with the painful feelings of my mind, occasioned by the entire neglect with which that Society has seen fit to treat me. A Society for whose benefit I directed my most zealous and active labours, until stern necessity humbled me before God, to ask of him relief in the way his wisdom should direct. But wish you to communicate to the Society my most fervent request, that measures may be taken, which may issue in my receiving what is my due. This request is made with reference to my first duty, which is to provide for my family; it is made with reference to that brotherly conduct which is indispensable [sic] for the maintainance of christian fellowship, and with that principle of moral rectitude

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1. Letter from Hosea Ballou to Henry Archer, Clerk of the Universalist Society of Salem. Boston, July 3, 1818.

which requires us to do as we would be done by. Some reply from the Society favourable to this request would be received with great satisfaction, by the Society's most humble

Servant Hosea Ballou.<sup>1</sup>

Although Hosea's letters were read to the church and referred to the proper authorities,<sup>2</sup> no action appears to have been taken. By 1821 the money was still owed- with interest.<sup>3</sup> Whether Hosea ever received it is problematical.<sup>4</sup>

1. Letter from Hosea Ballou to Joseph Newhall. Boston, May 15, 1819.

2. Perley Putnam's Book, pp. 66, 69.

3. List and Amounts of Debts against the Universal Society in Salem, June, 1821.

4. It is possible that Hosea transferred the notes to a gentleman by the name of Samuel H. Reed. Copies of two letters from Nathaniel Frothingham of the society to Reed, dated November 15, 1820, and July 2, 1821, are in the files of the Salem Society, and appear to indicate that this may have been the case. In both letters Frothingham apologizes for the society's inability to meet his demands. What the transaction between Ballou, Reed and the church involved is not clear. Perley Putnam recorded in his note book the following jumbled account which, if true, does not do credit to Hosea Ballou: "When Mr. Ballou left us the committee Settled with him and for the Balance they then owed him they gave him two Society notes, for the Balance that was then due Which notes He carried to Vermont and there sold them and took a mortgade [sic] of the mans farm with a condition that if he the former did not pay the amount of the notes at a given time the farm Should be his (Ballous) The man who held the notes Called on the committee to pay the amount of the notes which was not in the power of the committee to do at the time the former informed Mr. Ballou of the circumstances He Says well if you cannot pay me the amount of the morg [rest of word illegible] the farm is mine, Hence he turned the man from his farm and put his disipated Son on to it He (Ballou) than caused the notes to be Sued, Got Judgment against the Society, attached all the Pews in the House belonging to the Corporation and had them Sold at auction The whole of which did not sell for much more than to pay the court Expenses, after that he Scolded the Sheriff

The Salem society had fallen on evil days. It promised Hosea's successor Joshua Flagg \$700.00,<sup>1</sup> but the records show that Flagg could not collect his money and finally left in desperation. His successor, Barzillai Streeter, was promised \$400 a year!<sup>2</sup> Thus it can be seen that the society continued to go down hill after Ballou left for Boston.

Despite his financial problems with Salem, Hosea seems to have remained in friendly relations with them at least for awhile. After Joshua Flagg left Salem Hosea helped the society fill its pulpit on a number of occasions and appears to have paved the way for the call of Barzillai Streeter.<sup>3</sup>

More serious opposition to Hosea's move came from Paul Dean of the First Universalist Society. He "distinctly informed" Hosea that he did not want him to come to Boston.<sup>4</sup> Some claimed that he was afraid that Hosea's outspoken Universalism would force him to take a stand on matters concerning which he would prefer to remain silent.<sup>5</sup>

because he did not attach and Sell the Pulpit " Perley Putnam's Book, p. 18.

1. Ibid., p. 64.

2. Ibid., p. 76.

3. Letters from Hosea Ballou to Joseph Newhall [for the Committee] of the Universalist Society of Salem, February 1, May 14, 1820; May 24, 1820.

4. Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Second Society, p. 17.

5. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 99.

Of course, there was the more practical consideration that the presence of Ballou would have an adverse effect on his church. At any rate, the relationship between the two men was very strained, and continued so despite many efforts on the part of Hosea to overcome Dean's animosity.<sup>1</sup>

Dean was naturally invited to take a prominent part in the installation of Hosea as minister of the new church. If there was resentment in Dean's heart it was not obvious in the smooth flowing, well chosen words of his sermon.<sup>2</sup>

With peculiar satisfaction do I receive you as one, come to second my feeble efforts to testify the Gospel of God's universal grace in this metropolis.

. . . . .  
Your lot has cast you in a pleasant place, and I trust God has, and ever will give you here a goodly heritage.<sup>3</sup>

It was an aggressive Universalism that Hosea Ballou brought to Boston. Immediately he took the battle to the enemy's territory, choosing for the text of his evening sermon on the first Sunday of 1818 the words of Paul, II Thessalonians 1:7-9, -- words usually interpreted to refer to the day of judgment.<sup>4</sup> Hosea attempted to show that this

1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, II, 66-67.

2. Paul Dean, "A Sermon, delivered at the Re-Installation of the Rev. Hosea Ballou to the Pastoral Care and Charge of the Second Universalist Church and Congregation, in School Street, Boston, Dec. 25 [1817], " The Gospel Visitant, II (January, 1818), 232-249.

3. Ibid., pp. 243-44.

4. Hosea Ballou, A Sermon delivered at the Second Universalist Meeting in Boston, on the evening of the First Sabbath in January (Boston: 1818).

passage did not refer to a last judgment but of the judgment of Jesus' own generation. The fire mentioned in the text was the fire of God's love; the Lord chastizes man because he loves and wants to correct his ways.

This opposition to the traditional doctrine of the last judgment and his proclamation that God is a God of love was a fitting keynote to Hosea's long ministry in Boston. And it was the occasion for his first controversy with a ministerial brother. When Hosea's sermon was published,<sup>1</sup> it fell into the hands of a Methodist preacher, Timothy Merritt, who complained that

at one dash he strikes out the doctrine of a future judgment, the displeasure of God against the sinner, and all future punishments, thus opening the gates of heaven to the most depraved among mankind, and showing a broad instead of a narrow way, to eternal life.<sup>2</sup>

As far as Merritt could see, Hosea's reasoning amounted to this: "Jerusalem and many of the Jews were destroyed; therefore there is no future judgment."<sup>3</sup>

This was the beginning of several "replies" and "vin-

1. Ibid.

2. Timothy Merritt, Strictures on Mr. Ballou's Sermon, delivered at the Second Universalist Meeting in Boston, on the Evening of the First Sabbath in January, 1818 (Boston: 1818), p. 4.

3. Ibid., p. 8.

dications."<sup>1</sup> It cannot be said either Ballou or Merritt attempted to understand the position of the other.

Merritt's parting words are indicative of the tone of the controversy.

Should this opponent [Ballou] write again, and use sophistry, declamation and evasion, instead of discussing the merits of the cause, he will consider his production as already answered, and take no further notice of it.<sup>2</sup>

With such a controversy on his hands so soon after his arrival in Boston, Hosea felt right in his element.

Hosea, in order to accomodate the crowds who wanted to hear him, preached three times on Sundays.<sup>3</sup> Practically all of the seats were taken in the morning; in the afternoon there were many standing in the aisles; and in the evening the aisles were crowded.<sup>4</sup> Many of these hearers were visitors in Boston who came to hear Ballou out of curiosity.

1. [Hosea Ballou], A Brief Reply to a Pamphlet entitled Strictures on Mr. Ballou's Sermon, delivered in the Second Universalist Meeting in Boston, on the Evening of the First Sabbath of January, 1818. By T. Merritt. By the Author of the Sermon (Boston: n.d. [1818]).

Timothy Merritt, A Vindication of the Common Opinion Relative to the Last Judgement and End of the World. In answer to Mr. Ballou's Reply (Boston: 1818).

Hosea Ballou, A Brief Reply to a Pamphlet entitled a Vindication of the Common Opinion Relative to the Last Judgment and End of the World. In answer to Mr. Ballou's Reply. By Timothy Merritt (Boston: n.d. [1818]).

2. Merritt, Vindication, p. 31.

3. Safford, Hosea Ballou, p. 127.

4. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 105.

Those who went away convinced of the truth of his doctrine took Universalism home with them to their communities and were responsible, in many cases, for the birth of new societies.<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt that Universalism was given great impetus by the presence of its greatest preacher in the metropolis.

From August, 1818, to July of the following year, on alternate Sabbath evenings Hosea presented a series of lecture sermons.<sup>2</sup> Many of them were preached on texts which people had questioned him about. Others were preached definitely by request.<sup>3</sup> His purpose was to demolish the interpretations of texts used to justify belief in eternal misery. "We are not only at liberty to reject all ideas which have been established by tradition without proper evidence, but it is our religious duty to do so."<sup>4</sup>

Although Ballou's style in the Lecture Sermons is quite unappealing to the modern taste, it can readily be seen why they were popular in his day of Biblical preaching. His approach is argumentative with a heavy accent on scriptural proof; his sermons abound in citations and quotations.

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1. Sylvanus Cobb, quoted by Ibid., p. 110.

2. Hosea Ballou, A Series of Lecture Sermons, delivered at the Second Universalist Meeting, in Boston (Boston: 1819).

3. Ibid., p. 289.

4. Ibid., p. 131.

Occasionally, but not often, he waxes poetic over the love of the Father to His children; on rare occasions his sermonizing approaches the aesthetic. But on the whole it is of pedestrian style.

The attendance during this series was uncommonly large, every part of the auditorium being crowded.<sup>1</sup> The sermons were printed by Henry Bowen of Hosea's congregation and had a wide circulation.<sup>2</sup>

The lectures are largely an exposition of the leading ideas found in the Treatise on Atonement: the infinite love of the Father for His children; the atonement as the reconciliation of man to God; Jesus a demonstration of God's love for man; the finite nature of sin, etc. All is here with an important exception,--there is no mention of the trinity. Although Hosea attacked that erroneous doctrine on occasion, he obviously felt it not essential in his pulpit presentations--or so it would appear from the many sermons which were put into print over the years. His main concern was to preach the joyful gospel of God's universal love for His children.

On the evening of July fourth, 1819, a young boot maker's apprentice was on his way down School Street on his

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1. Ibid., p. 412.

2. Ibid., p. 415.

way home. As he passed the meeting house of the Second Universalist Society he noticed the lights and realized there was a crowd within. Curiosity lured him into the meeting house where he found it necessary to ease himself into the crowded aisles. Up in the pulpit he saw a tall, impressive preacher comparing the love of God to the love of parents for their children.<sup>1</sup> Thomas Whittemore was moved by this message of love to God and man. He did not know then that the man in the pulpit was to change his life completely.<sup>2</sup>

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1. H. Ballou, Lecture Sermons, p. 387.

2. Thomas Whittemore, The Early Days of Thomas Whittemore. An Autobiography: Extending from A.D. 1800 to A.D. 1825. (Boston: 1859), pp. 155-156.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE UNIVERSALIST MAGAZINE

When Hosea Ballou had been in Boston for more than a year, Henry Bowen, a member of his School Street Church and his publisher, came to him with an idea. Bowen suggested that the sale of his sermons had been so good that it was possible that there was enough interest stirred up in Universalism to justify the publication of a weekly newspaper. Bowen was then publishing an unsuccessful quarto sheet by the title of The Weekly Magazine and Ladies' Miscellany. Hosea was doubtful that such a newspaper as Bowen proposed would be any more of a success, but Bowen figured that he had little to lose.<sup>1</sup> So, in doubt was born The Universalist Magazine, the first Universalist newspaper in America. The first issue was out on Saturday, July 3, 1819, with Hosea Ballou as Editor, Henry Bowen, Publisher.

Hosea set forth his editorial policy on the first page of the first number. The Magazine was to deal with the "momentous subjects of DOCTRINE, RELIGION, AND MORALITY."<sup>2</sup> The Editor invited readers to submit their thoughts which

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1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, II, 68-69.
  2. Universalist Magazine, I, 1.

might promote the "growth" of these "essential concerns," whether or not they were in agreement with his own thoughts on these matters. Furthermore, members of all denominations were invited to contribute, for the Universalist is no sectarian. "He keeps his eye on the divine Master, who is the same to all nations, to all sects, and to all denominations."<sup>1</sup>

As might be expected, the Magazine, despite the hopes of the Editor, became primarily the organ of the Universalist denomination. The first few issues naturally enough contained largely the anonymous writing of Ballou. Soon, however, numerous correspondents began contributing to its pages. It was largely devoted to selections from sermons, letters and debates on subjects of interest among Universalists, notices of births, deaths, marriages; the laying of cornerstones, etc.

Many were the articles devoted to refuting the ever present charge that Universalism leads to licentiousness. And the Universalists of the day were much exercised over such reports as the "Death-Bed Exercises of a Woman Who had Lived a Universalist" but had renounced the heresy just in time. Wrote the woman's daughter in the Chillicothe, Ohio, Weekly Recorder:

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1. Ibid.

She said she was struck with death's cold chills--the darts of the "king of terrors" were piercing through every nerve. She found her universal plan would not answer, and renounced it, observing, "The bridge on which I trusted has fallen under me--I am now dying and have no hopes of myself." O my friend, my pen cannot describe, nor your imagination conceive the horrors of her mind. Her screams of dying anguish, and groans of black despair were too much for poor human nature to endure.

But the dying woman found her peace in the prayers of her family and in her own renunciation of Universalism.<sup>1</sup> Such dangerous stories had to be refuted. The Editor of the Magazine finds in this story

such marks of erroneous education, such strong indications of superstition, such blind fanaticism, such palpable absurdities, such a preference to vain imaginations in comparison with the word of God and his moral attributes, that to neglect considering the subject in a way to show its total want of propriety seem a neglect of duty.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, much satisfaction was gained in being able to report the story of the young woman who just a few hours before death had written a letter to a Universalist friend "expressing her firm belief in the doctrine which she before disputed, and detailing the treatment she received in consequence of her avowal of her faith."<sup>3</sup>

There were things to laugh about, too. The pages of the Magazine are spiced with an occasional "Original Anecdote" which makes the reader smile--at the expense of the

1. Universalist Magazine, I, 58.
2. Ibid., p. 59; See also pp. 146-147.
3. Ibid., p. 117.

orthodox. There is the story of the little boy who, hearing his elders continually talk about how Universalist preachers tell their people it does not matter how they act, finally gains permission to attend a Universalist meeting. Asked, when he returned home, how he liked the preacher, he said not at all and that he would never hear him again, for "You told me he would let me commit as much sin as I pleased, but he says more against sin than our minister does...."<sup>1</sup> Then there were the little children who were taken to hear the Methodist preacher who "with a liberal hand" dealt out to sinners in his sermons "the awful denunciations, and unmerciful punishments" of hell. On their return home their mother questioned them on what they had heard. Her "little son between five and six years old, stepped up to her, and looking very earnestly in her face said, 'Ma'am, did you ever hear a man swear so in all your life.'<sup>2</sup>

The Editor of the Magazine attempted to be helpful regarding puzzling texts of scripture. He welcomed his readers to submit them to the paper so that he or one of the papers many correspondents might try their skill at explanation.

Despite the many correspondents who contributed to the Magazine, it must have been a strain on Hosea's own writing arm to keep its four pages weekly filled. His penchant for

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1. Ibid., p. 62.  
2. Ibid., p. 180.

rhyming was given full latitude; many a "fugitive" verse was penned to fill the "Poets' Corner." Many were the columns filled the first year by a "Dialogue between a Universalist and a Limitarian"<sup>1</sup> which ran serially.

Time after time the Universalist leads the Limitarian to the discovery of new truth, until finally he is ready (in the last issue of Volume One) to embrace the true way and to give his friend the right hand of fellowship and to offer "up to our heavenly Father my hearty desires that you may still labour with success in the vindication of the truth as it is in Jesus."<sup>2</sup> Universalists no doubt followed with bated breath the stilted language of this dialogue, not only to see the outcome, but to give them ammunition for their battles with the orthodox.

Recourse was had to the various other religious papers of the country. Articles and clippings from these other sheets helped to fill many an inch in the Magazine. Excerpts from the sermons of the "fire and brimstone" clergy of the New England area were quoted, only to have their propositions exploded by the penetrating observations of the Editor. Of particularly great value to his fellow religionists was Hosea's

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1. Universalist Magazine, I, 4, 6-7, 10, 16, 24, 28, 46, 60, 76, 80, 84, 86, 94, 100, 108, 116, 128, 134, 144, 152, 168, 180, 184, 188, 192, 196, 204, 208.

2. Ibid., p. 208.

inclusion of the calls and notices of conventions and association meetings and the reports and circular letters which came forth from such gatherings.

The pages of the Magazine offer a fairly good check on what the Editor was reading. A full complement of extracts is included in its columns. Hosea draws on one of his favorite books, Charles Chauncy's Salvation of All Men, for "Proofs of Universal Salvation."<sup>1</sup> In the light of his own continuing liberalization of thought, it is interesting to find many extracts from the writings of the radical English Unitarian Joseph Priestley.<sup>2</sup>

Hosea is outspoken in his criticism of the doctrine of the trinity and in his advocacy of unitarian ideas.<sup>3</sup> His own attacks are supplemented by excerpts from various well-known Unitarians, American and English. Hosea, in the third and fourth issues of the paper, includes two long excerpts from the famous Baltimore Sermon, Unitarian Christianity, of his celebrated fellow-Bostonian William Ellery Channing,<sup>4</sup> delivered in May of that year (1819). Priestley's friend, the prominent English Unitarian Thomas Belsham, is quoted at length,<sup>5</sup> and the sad story of the

1. Ibid.; p. 58.
2. Ibid.; pp. 73-74, 77-78, 81-82, 85.
3. Ibid.; pp. 23, 43, 47, 135.
4. Ibid.; pp. 9-10, 13-14. Cf. Chapter XVII of this dissertation.
5. Ibid., II, 89, 93.

treatment of Servetus at the hands of Calvin and his Genevan cohorts is excerpted from Robinson's Ecclesiastical Researches.<sup>1</sup> This sympathetic treatment of Unitarianism is significant. The Unitarian preachers, writers, and publications appealed generally to the more wealthy and socially elite in Boston and New England. The promotion of liberal religion among the common people of the area was the accomplishment of the Universalists and such forces as Hosea Ballou's Universalist Magazine.

Editorially Hosea Ballou was conservative in all things except religion. The editorial columns of the Magazine are devoted, with rare exceptions, to the religious and moral questions which were agitated among the Universalists. The rare exceptions to this rule can be stated very briefly. On one occasion he spoke out on "A Subject of Regret," meaning the use of intoxicating liquors.

Why should the reasonable creature man become his own enemy, disregard his rational being and happiness, and destroy all that is noble in himself by indulging in intemperance? This, though to the reasonable mind, one of the greatest outrages ever committed on propriety and decency, has become one of the most frequent, which are practised in our country. This is certainly a subject of regret. Parents, be cautious that the example you set be not such as may lead your sons into this vice. Young men, you are too noble, too glorious, in your reasonable nature to render it fit that you should be governed by appetite and passion. Be careful that you keep in the path which reason

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1. Universalist Magazine, I, 125-126, 129.

dictates,<sup>1</sup> and you will shun intemperance, and avoid its bane.

With this outburst Hosea's comments on the subject ceased; he carried on no crusade against intoxicating liquor.

When the question of the religious establishment was posed in the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention in late 1820 and early 1821, Hosea, of course, came out against the establishment of Congregationalism.<sup>3</sup> To say that religion had to have the arm of the state to support it or people would not be religious was as ridiculous as to propose that it was "necessary to compel [sic] young men to marry" or that it was necessary to have laws to force men to till the soil, or "to compel the merchant by law to see and attend to his business." Man worships from the same motivation as he does these other things; "his hopes of gain are sufficient without any such law."<sup>4</sup> Daniel Webster, said Hosea, had the better argument than those who said an establishment of religion involved the very salvation of men's souls. Webster merely spoke in favor of it on the basis of state policy. But, wrote Hosea, if it is to be a matter of state policy,

1. Universalist Magazine, I, 87.

2. Journal of Debates and Proceedings in the Convention of Delegates, Chosen to Revise the Constitution of Massachusetts, Begun and Holden at Boston, November 15, 1820, and Continued by Adjournment to January 9, 1821. Reported for The Boston Daily Advertiser (New Edition; Boston: The Boston Daily Advertiser, 1853). [1st ed., 1821]

3. Universalist Magazine, II, 107, 111.

4. Ibid., p. 107.

it is necessary for the state constitution to define the doctrine of Christianity. Hosea suggested, sarcastically, that this might "be done in thirty-nine articles, or more or less as the constituted authority should see fit to determine...."<sup>1</sup>

Aside from these instances, one searches the pages of the Magazine in vain for stands on political and social issues. Hosea Ballou was not a crusader. Yet, he believed in reform. Reform religion and all other reforms will follow. Help men to see the true God, the loving Father, and they will love Him and their fellow men.

The advent of the Universalist Magazine was not without opposition. Interestingly enough the first opposition came from a Unitarian! The editor of the Boston Kaleidoscope proposed certain questions which he believed cast doubt on the truth of Universalism.<sup>2</sup> Before he knew it, he was involved in a dispute with Hosea Ballou. It seems that the Unitarian editor was opposed to more than Universalism, for he advertised that the front page of his paper would be devoted to explaining and defending "what is now called rational and liberal Christianity, as distinguished from Roman Catholic-

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1. Ibid., p. 111.  
 2. Quoted by Ibid., I, 11.

ism, Calvinism, Hopkinsianism, Universalism, and Deism."<sup>1</sup>  
 He did not realize what he was getting into. A flood of words descended upon him from the columns of the Universalist Magazine until he finally, it would appear in desperation, called off the controversy.<sup>2</sup>

The editor of the Christian Advocate announced in an open letter to Henry Bowen (he meant Hosea Ballou) that he hoped the conspiracy against Christianity in France which had brought down God's displeasure would have discouraged anyone from attempting it again. But now "using all the allurements of smooth language" Hosea Ballou was making his own damnation sure by deceiving "the simple and unthinking."<sup>3</sup>  
 The editor of the Ulster Plebian (Kingston, New York) announced that he had consigned his two complimentary copies of the Magazine to the flames for fear they would fall into the hands of his family and corrupt them.<sup>4</sup>

Reactions to the paper, pro and con, came from all over the inhabited parts of the United States.<sup>5</sup> It appears that it was Henry Bowen's policy to promote the Magazine by sending complimentary copies not only to the editors of other newspapers and periodicals but to the various post offices

1. Quoted by Ibid., pp. 14, 22.
2. See Ibid., pp. 11, 14-15, 18-19, 22-23, 26-27, 31, 34-35, 38-39, 63.
3. Quoted by Universalist Magazine, I, 86.
4. Quoted by Ibid., p. 90; see also p. 127.
5. E.g., Ibid., pp. 78-79; 83; 126, 130-131, 171.

throughout the country, hoping thereby to drum up interest and to increase his subscription lists. The opposition stirred by this procedure, bitter as it was at times, had its humorous aspects:

PROFANITY

"Answer a fool according to his folly."

THE following, which was returned on one of our Subscription Papers, as it appears, from J. SHAW, Post Master, Bradleysville, (S.C.) shows not only the bitter spirit of opposition, but the profanity in which it is willing to indulge.

Infernal Pit.

My Good Friend,-- Continue as you have done widely to disseminate your very princely Magazine, and be assured that you shall shortly have one of the most exalted thrones amongst us.

Yours with all the love of a Fiend,  
NICK LUCIFER.

REPLY; We have for a long time been of opinion, that it was not necessary to go into the future world to find the infernal pit so much talked of, and we are now furnished with a demonstration of the correctness of this opinion; the above letter came by mail directly from that pit, where it appears there is a Post Office and a Post Master. We have the satisfaction also to be certified that the Universalist Magazine does not please those who are in this infernal pit, for the number of the Magazine we sent there, was sent back with the above letter; but it was not scorched, nor was the smell of fire or brimstone on it.<sup>1</sup>

Opposition never fazed Hosea Ballou; he imbibed it and loved every moment of it. And the Universalist Magazine thrived on it also. At \$2.50 a year it managed to pay for

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1. Ibid., p. 163.

itself without advertising; and, although the publisher continually publishes notices of money owed by subscribers, it appears to have been making a good profit.<sup>1</sup> More important, it was a great stimulus to the Universalist movement.

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1. Ibid., II, 207.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE BOSTON YEARS

Hosea Ballou's ministry in Boston covered a span of almost thirty-five years. These were busy years, as can be said for most of his life. Writing, editing, pastoral work, and, of course, preaching--their joys and sorrows--filled his cup to overflowing.

He had not been at School Street long when he decided that something should be done about the inadequate hymn book used by his society. The so-called "Convention Hymn Book," as has been seen, was a grand failure; Universalists had gone back to the standard collections with the objectionable language concerning the trinity and atonement. Hosea suggested to Edward Turner in Charlestown that it was time for a change. Turner agreed. Thus the two spent much of the winter of 1820-21 collaborating on a new collection.<sup>1</sup> This time the original offerings were limited to about fifty.<sup>2</sup> Universalist stanzas by Abner Kneeland, Sebastian Streeter, Mrs. Murray, Ballou, etc., are found mixed in with the standards from Watts, Doddridge, Tate, Rippen's Collection, Wesley, etc. Their aim was to produce a

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1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, II, 154.  
2. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 124.

collection which would allow the worshipper to "sing with the spirit and with the understanding also."<sup>1</sup> That they were not narrowly sectarian in their approach can be seen by their inclusion of such a stanza as this by Abner Kneeland:

The blessing of the Father, Son.  
And Holy Ghost be giv'n;  
The three who do unite in one,  
And record keep in heav'n.<sup>2</sup>

Early in May, 1821, the Universalist Magazine carried a notice that the Ballou-Turner hymn book was "now in press."<sup>3</sup> The new collection was well received when it appeared; a new edition was called for within three years.<sup>4</sup> And it remained in general use for the next ten years when it was replaced by the collection of Sebastian and Russell Streeter.<sup>5</sup>

Even in the days when ministers were expected to spend much time in the study, there was much pastoral work to be done. Hosea never neglected this aspect of church life, despite the pressure of writing and preaching. He was often called upon to visit the sick--often persons who had little or no connection with his society. As the faithful pastor he never hesitated to lend a helping hand, attempting to

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1. Hosea Ballou and Edward Turner, The Universalists' Hymn-Book: a New Collection of Psalms and Hymns, for the use of Universalist Societies (Boston: 1821), p. iii.

2. Ibid., p. 223.

3. Universalist Magazine, II (May 5, 1821). 179.

4. 1824.

5. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, II, 156.

practice as well as preach the doctrine of Universal love.<sup>1</sup>

But his first love was preaching. At fifty he was at his prime in the pulpit. Only occasionally did he prepare his sermons in written form before delivery; these would be special occasions. Never, however, did he take a manuscript into the pulpit with him.<sup>2</sup> He delivered his sermons extempore. His old sermon workbook is still extant,<sup>3</sup> with hundreds of sermon sketches in closely scrawled sentences. Each text is stated and the message derived from it outlined very briefly. With the exception of two collections of his sermons which were stenographically recorded as he delivered them,<sup>4</sup> his published sermons were written out after delivery.

As he sat in the pulpit before the sermon, he was buried in thought, no doubt developing his message in his mind. His countenance was anything but bright, under the circumstances. Persons seeing him for the first time wondered if this was the great preacher of the love of God to

1. Ibid., p. 157.

2. Ibid., p. 196.

3. Hosea Ballou, Workbook. MS in possession of the Universalist Historical Society Library, Crane Theological School, Tufts University.

4. Hosea Ballou, The Eleven Sermons, which were Preached during a Visit to Philadelphia in the Months of December and January, 1821-2....To which are added Critical and Explanatory Notes, by the Rev. Abner Kneeland (Philadelphia: 1822).

Hosea Ballou, Nine Sermons on Important Doctrinal and Practical Subject, delivered in Philadelphia, November, 1834. (Philadelphia: 1835).

man. He looked so cross! When Lucius R. Paige as a young man arrived in Boston to study divinity with Hosea, he went first to hear him preach. As he sat in his pew looking up at his future teacher he was amazed. "...I thought him therossest man I had ever seen."<sup>1</sup> But the story was different when Hosea stood up to deliver his message. Then his face was alive with happiness. With his spectacles on he would read through his text; he would read it a second time for emphasis. Next he would remove his glasses and carefully put them into their case. He would take out his handkerchief, fold it, and lay it across the Bible open in front of him. This ritual dramatically caught the attention of the congregation which waited with great expectation for his first words. Then, very slowly and deliberately, in a low voice, he would introduce his subject. His sentences at first were involved (sometimes confused). But as he began to warm to his subject, they became more conversational, more direct. His thoughts and words became sharper and hit his hearers with driving force. His voice rose, his right arm extended itself, his face shone; and then as he reached the height of his discourse "his words came in an impetuous flow, and the saliva would issue in constant and abundant spray from his lips."<sup>2</sup> There was no escaping the power of his

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1. Quoted by Safford, Hosea Ballou, p. 213.

2. E. G. Brooks, "Rev. Hosea Ballou," Universalist Quarterly, (New Series) VII (October, 1870), 406.

words. "...You felt as if his hand were on your shoulder, and he were speaking directly to you."<sup>1</sup> The truth of this eyewitness report is seen in this excerpt from one of his sermons:

Before this discourse is closed, it is necessary to make some remarks on what the opposers are endeavouring to insinuate against these plain and glorious truths of the gospel.

They are not disposed to meet these things in the way of open and candid investigation; but they will go from house to house, and from ear to ear, and whisper about licentious doctrine. They will endeavour to stop the people's ears and blind their eyes, lest they hear with their ears, and see with their eyes and be converted.

What, no future judgment! Is there to be no distinction in the world to come, between the righteous and the wicked? Are saints and sinners all to fare alike? It is then no matter what we do? We may indulge without restraint in all manner of iniquity. We may neglect the duties of religion; lie, steal, defraud; indulge in drunkenness and gluttony, together with base uncleanness, and all is just as well. Nay, better; for who, were it not for the terrors of condemnation in a future state, would be at the expense and trouble of public worship and religious duties, or refrain from the indulgence of sensuality? Such is the dust these enemies of the gospel throw into the air.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." Notice carefully; "he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption." He must receive his wages from the master he serves; he must reap his harvest where he sows his seed.

Go to our prisons and places of correction; you will find hundreds who believe in a day of judgment in the next world, and have no doubts that punishment everlasting will be inflicted on the wicked, accordingly as they have been educated to believe; but they all

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1. Ibid., p. 407.

intend to repent before they die, and that is early enough according to the argument of our opposers. These miserable wretches believe as they have been taught; and they act as if they were full convinced, that religion, virtue, justice, temperance and godliness were nothing but so many obstructions to their present happiness, and of no use this side the eternal world. O fatal delusion! "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depth of hell." These sinful riots are in the darkest regions of hell.

Look round on society. Do misery and wretchedness mark the footsteps of religion, virtue, temperance, prudence, industry, economy, justice, love and mercy? No, my brethren, this is not the case. But it remains true that "the way of the transgressor is hard," and that "there is no peace to the wicked."

The religion of Jesus is represented by many beautiful figures; such as bread for the hungry, water for the thirsty, a feast of fat things for all people.

After all, what is this religion which is founded on the fear of future misery? Is there any real sincerity in it? Is there any of the true love of God in this religion? "Perfect love casts out fear; he that feareth is not made perfect in love." You provide for your companions and your dependent offspring because you love them, and your duty is perfect delight. Can you honestly say, that you would not give your children bread when they are hungry, if you were not afraid of everlasting punishment hereafter?

Away with this deception. Let us learn to love God because he has first loved us; let us cautiously obey his commandments, in keeping of which there is great reward.<sup>1</sup>

Hosea was perfectly capable of humor in the pulpit, also; but he usually produced a smile on the faces of his congregation not through the medium of a well-told joke but by an

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1. Hosea Ballou, Select Sermons, delivered on Various Occasions from Important Passages of Scripture (Boston: 1832), pp. 19-21. This sermon was delivered at the School Street Church on the "Second Sabbath" in February, 1818.

ingenious argument,<sup>1</sup> or by his good-natured approach to a problem. While he was preaching at Milford in December of 1821 during the meeting of the Southern Association, the sun came blazing through the windows of the meeting house--right into his eyes. Hosea began speaking of God's impartiality, his goodness to all men, using as an illustration the glorious sun "which," he said, "nearly blinds me with its abundant light." Someone took the hint and hung a coat over the blindless window.<sup>2</sup>

Hosea's preaching was invariably argumentative. It did not matter what the subject,<sup>3</sup> he was a natural born debater and always presented his subject as if someone were disputing him. Even his prayers had an argumentative flavor. One of his feminine hearers once remarked that she did not "usually enjoy Mr. Ballou's prayers so well as those of some others, for the reason that he seemed to be arguing with God."<sup>4</sup> Argumentative though they were his prayers were fresh, avoiding cant and stock phrases.<sup>5</sup> If he did argue with God, he at least did so in an original manner.

Hosea's early lack of education and polish was obvious in his writing and preaching. His early writings, even his

1. O. A. Skinner, quoted by Safford, Hosea Ballou, p. 188.

2. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, II, 173

3. Brooks, "Rev. Hosea Ballou," Universalist Quarterly, (New Series) VII (October, 1870), 408.

4. Ibid., p. 409.

5. Safford, Hosea Ballou, p. 210.

masterpiece, the Treatise on Atonement, are in the language of a country lad. But they had spontaneity, brilliance of argument, and wit. As the years passed and he became more practiced in the art of writing, he overcame to a certain extent his rough and ready writing style—but, often, at the expense of spontaneity. His elocution and pronunciation in the pulpit no doubt were improved by his many years of experience in the great cultural metropolis of Boston. But during his early years in Boston his preaching smacked of his country upbringing. A student at the Boston Latin School, the first time he heard Hosea in 1825, recorded for posterity this extraordinary example of Ballou's delivery: "Brethering, I perceed to dev-il-ope and illusterate the follerin p'intis."<sup>1</sup>

Uncultured as his language was, Hosea had a powerful effect on his listeners. To the influence of his preaching were attributed "thousands on thousands" of conversions to Universalism.<sup>2</sup> Many of these converts were clergymen from other denominations.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Thomas Baldwin Thayer quoted by Ibid., pp. 213-214. Dean Elmer A. Holbrook, the present owner of the Ballou farm at Richmond, New Hampshire, informed the present writer that until thirty to forty years ago Richmonditers spoke a dialect all their own. He has never heard anything like it. He attributes it to the inbreeding and isolation which was then true of the town.

2. O. A. Skinner quoted by Ibid., p. 190.

3. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, II, 200.

Many theological students came to Hosea in his years in Boston. The most notable was Thomas Whittemore. He had first heard the famous Universalist preacher at the installation of Abner Kneeland at the church in Charlestown in 1811.<sup>1</sup> Thomas was then a boy of twelve and the experience meant little to him. It was several years later that he wandered into the School Street Church one evening and was very much impressed with Hosea's message of love to God and man.<sup>2</sup> Thomas Whittemore had no intention of studying for the ministry; it had never entered his mind. When he first met Hosea personally he was an apprentice to a boot maker by the name of Abel Baker.<sup>3</sup> One day in 1820 Hosea entered Baker's newly-purchased house on Mason Street.<sup>4</sup> Whittemore was impressed with the friendliness of the preacher and soon conceived of the idea of asking Hosea to help him with his English. He had had little education and realized his lack.<sup>5</sup> Hosea was obviously impressed with the intelligence and humor of this "Boston rough,"<sup>6</sup> for he agreed to tutor him. This was in April of 1820;<sup>7</sup> a short time later Whittemore, who was passionately fond of music, was playing the violincello

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1. Ibid., I, 359.

2. See Chapter XII of this study.

3. Whittemore, The Early Days, p. 118.

4. Ibid., p. 164.

5. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, II, 129.

6. Safford, Hosea Ballou, 191.

7. Whittemore, The Early Days, p. 167.

in the School Street Choir.<sup>1</sup> There, although he was primarily concerned with music, he was influenced by the preaching of his teacher. Then, too, study with Ballou was proceeding satisfactorily, the latter even publishing in the poetry column of the Universalist Magazine a little opus of his pupil with the title "Reflections Over the Grave of an Infant."<sup>2</sup> Soon Hosea (no doubt pressed for material) was publishing all of the contributions of Whittemore, and the lad was reading proof on the Magazine when the Editor was out of town.<sup>3</sup>

One day Hosea inquired of Whittemore whether he was planning to enter the ministry. The latter said "No," admitting that his faith had been shaken by what he thought were traces of Calvinism in the Bible. Hosea suggested that he read Paley's Evidences to correct his misapprehensions. Between Ballou and Paley, Whittemore soon became convinced that the Scriptures were not Calvinistic and became eager to preach. During that summer and fall (1820) he spent all of his spare time reading in divinity.<sup>4</sup> Hosea realized that his young friend had no money to prepare himself for his new career but had an idea who could help him. At the close of the Sunday service at School Street on December thirty-first,

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1. Ibid., p. 172.

2. Universalist Magazine, I, 184.

3. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, II, 130.

4. Ibid., pp. 130-131.

Hosea announced that he had a special subject to discuss with those who cared to stay for a few minutes. The result was a collection of \$150.00 to pay for Whittemore's room and board for one year.<sup>1</sup> On the first of January, 1821, Thomas Whittemore entered the family of Hosea Ballou as a theological student.<sup>2</sup>

Thomas Whittemore was very much at home with the Ballous. Ruth Ballou treated him like one of her nine children. There were nine now: Ruth had given birth to her last child, a boy, in April of 1820.<sup>3</sup> He was named after Hosea's father, and John Murray: Maturin Murray Ballou.

Thomas Whittemore planned at least a year's study in theology before taking to the pulpit, but Hosea had other plans. He believed the best way to learn the art of preaching is to practice it. Because of this, and the fact that there was great need of preachers among Universalists, Whittemore--unqualified as he felt--accepted a call to the church at Milford after three months training!<sup>4</sup>

Hosea Ballou had a habit which sometimes disconcerted people. When something disturbed him he would groan. Not

1. Ibid., p. 133.

2. Whittemore, The Early Days, p. 223.

3. April 14, 1820. A. Ballou, The Ballous in America, p. 131. How many children were born to Hosea and Ruth is difficult to determine. Safford, Hosea Ballou, pp. 221-22n, gives the total of eleven. Adin Ballou, The Ballous in America, p. 131, gives the figure as thirteen. Nine, of course, survived infancy.

4. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, II, 133, 148.

long after Thomas Whittemore had moved to his pastorate in Milford, he was invited to preach at the Third Universalist Society in Boston. He accepted the invitation and, much to his delight, found his old teacher present for the occasion. Hosea sat in the pulpit while Whittemore delivered his sermon.

I preached what I thought was as good a sermon as I could give, from the text, Mat. 11:28-30, "Come unto me, all ye that labor," etc. Several times during the sermon, I heard father Ballou, who sat behind me, groan quite audibly. I thought perhaps he was sick; but I learned afterward what was the cause of his trouble. I went home with him to spend the night; and all the way to his house he said but little to me, but kept talking to himself, as if "treasuring up" something. When we arrived at his house, he began about the sermon. The substance of his remarks was, that it was in bad taste, words were mispronounced, new words coined, bad metaphors occurred, etc., and instances of these things were pointed out. I, of course, was crestfallen, for up in Milford I was a great man. Finally, said he, there was one good thing in the sermon. "What was that, sir?" said I, glad of a little praise. "The text," said he, "the text; and that was the only good thing in the whole!"<sup>1</sup>

Although Hosea Ballou was now settled in one of the most prominent churches of the Universalist movement he was as active for the greater cause as ever. All during the Boston years he travelled widely, preaching evening after evening as he did in his circuit riding days. "If you want to keep the bell a-ringing, you must keep the tongue a-thumping," was the homely philosophy he preached to the little

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1. Ibid., p. 154n.

group of faithful gathered at the school house in Woburn.<sup>1</sup>  
 If Universal salvation is to be believed it must be preached vigorously and often in language that the people understand: "As in Adam all died, even so in Christ shall--half?-  
a double l spells all; shall all be made alive."<sup>2</sup>

Hosea kept his "tongue a-thumping" in many of the towns around Boston. Due to his efforts a Universalist group was gathered in Roxbury in late 1818. He preached his first sermon there on November 29, and early in the next year Paul Dean joined him, preaching on alternate Sunday evenings at the town hall.<sup>3</sup> By August of 1820 the society there was strong enough to lay the cornerstone for a new meeting house on which occasion "the Throne of Grace was implored in a fervent and affectionate manner by the Rev. Mr. Ballou, of Boston."<sup>4</sup> In addition to his Sunday evening preaching in Roxbury, he found time to nurture the new group at Cambridgeport, which met at a school house. By the end of 1822 this group had dedicated its new meeting house with Hosea preaching the sermon.<sup>5</sup>

Hosea did not confine his efforts to the Boston area. Even the island of Nantucket heard his message of God's

1. Quoted in Our Paper. Monthly newspaper of the Unitarian Church of Woburn, I (April, 1876), 66.
2. Quoted in Ibid.
3. H. S. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, 2d, p. 76.
4. Universalist Magazine, II, 23. See also p. 111.
5. Ibid., IV, 104.

Universal salvation. He spent ten days on the island, after which he returned to the mainland and boarded a stage coach at New Bedford for Boston. There was one other passenger aboard. The stranger struck up a conversation.

"You just from the island, I suppose?"

"Yes," answered Hosea.

"Well, they say old Ballou is over there, preaching his heresy. Did you see him?"

"Yes, I saw him," was the amiable reply.

"Well, he's a rough old fellow. I don't like him."

"Why not?" asked Hosea.

"Because he preaches that all men will be saved and go to heaven in their sins, and no man in his senses can believe that!"

"But, sir, did you ever hear him preach?"

"No; I hope not," answered the man determinedly.

"Then you may be misinformed as to what he does preach," said Hosea, in a mild manner. "Now I think he would say, if he were here, that he did not believe nor preach as you have represented."

"But what does he believe, then?"

"I think he would say that sinners are to be saved from their sins, not in their sins. Christ came to save the world from sin, not in sin; and furthermore we are told in the Scriptures that 'he that is dead is free from sin,' and

he that is freed from sin must surely be holy, and consequently happy."

"Sir, if I may be bold," said the man, after a moment's thought, "where do you live when at home?"

"I live in Boston, sir."

"Whose church do you attend?"

"Mr. Ballou's church, sir."

"What is your name?"

"My name is Ballou."

Despite Hosea's friendly manner, the man, at a loss for something to say, left the coach at the next stop.<sup>1</sup>

Late December and early January (1821-22) Hosea made his first trip as far south as Philadelphia. On his way he filled preaching engagements in New Haven and New York. New Haven, the seat of Yale College, he said was "the bitterest place I ever visited, and manifests the most unreasonable opposition to every thing which looks like charity."<sup>2</sup> At New York he preached at the Pearl Street Church<sup>3</sup> sharing the pulpit with Edward Mitchell, since Murray's death one of the few stalwart trinitarians left in the denomination.

At Philadelphia he was entertained by his old friend Abner Kneeland who was now ministering to the church on

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1. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, pp. 112-114.

2. His own account in Universalist Magazine, III, 122.

3. Ibid., p. 121.

Lombard Street. The sermons which Hosea preached in Philadelphia were so well attended that for his last appearance the Grand Saloon of the Washington Benevolent Society was used for the meeting. This hall which had a capacity of several thousand was so crowded that Hosea had trouble walking to the rostrum.<sup>1</sup>

The sermons Hosea preached on this visit to Philadelphia were taken down in shorthand and published.<sup>2</sup> Despite the fact that Hosea had the opportunity to examine the first three before he left Philadelphia and that Kneeland "examined and corrected" the rest, they were printed substantially as delivered extempore.<sup>3</sup> The reader is struck immediately with the difference between these and most of his other published sermons. Here one can virtually hear Hosea Ballou speaking to a crowded auditorium. The repetition, the emphasis, the construction, is notably different from his other sermons which were written out after delivery. The formal, in places stilted style of the Lecture Sermons, for instance, is completely missing.

Hosea accepted the challenge to base some of these sermons on specific texts thought to refute the doctrine of Universalism.<sup>4</sup> He explains them with his customary agility.

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1. Ibid.
  2. Hosea Ballou, Eleven Sermons....
  3. Ibid., p. v.
  4. Ibid., pp. 89, 116.

As a general rule, as has been noted, Hosea avoided bringing the question of the trinity into his sermons. It is interesting that in his final sermon in which gives a long catalogue of the false doctrines fostered by the church, he does not refer to the trinity.<sup>1</sup> This is particularly striking when it is noted that Ballou used this same sermon when he arrived home in Boston and in the Boston version, preached in his own pulpit, he includes the trinity along with the other corruptions of Christianity.<sup>2</sup> This, of course, may have been a human error due to the unusual conditions of his last address in Philadelphia.<sup>3</sup>

If it is possible to sum up eleven sermons in a few sentences, it can be said that Hosea's series is one sustained song of God's love for his children. God will never cease to love man; he will continually advance him in knowledge.<sup>4</sup>

...Love God constantly, and abundant will be your peace--abundant your joy--abundant your satisfaction and delight. And in the room of tending to what our opposers sometimes assert, to licentiousness, to a corruption of morals, and an indulgence of unbridled passions, it will always tend to lead us to conduct ourselves with the utmost propriety in relation to our heavenly Father--in relation to all mankind as

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1. Ibid., pp. 132-141.

2. Select Sermons, p. 183. Cf. Ibid.

3. Kneeland felt compelled to discuss the omission in the critical notes his appended to the Philadelphia collection. Eleven Sermons, pp. 157-159.

4. Ibid., p. 7.

brethren, and in relation to ourselves.<sup>1</sup>

...Let each of us say, "If God loves me, I will imitate my Father in heaven, and if the gospel embraces us all, let me do the same and embrace my fellow creatures in the affection of the soul; and let me live in this religion, walk in this perfect law of liberty, and be blessed in my deeds."<sup>2</sup>

Hosea made this journey to Philadelphia when the Restorationist Controversy was beginning to wax hot. But he showed admirable restraint in breaching the subject of no future punishment. He approaches the problem by discussing punishment for sin in the here and now. He refutes those who say that sin is not punished in this life. "God has ordained laws on earth by which vice is punished, and we see the wicked are miserable beings, in the present tense." The way of the wicked is hard. Man's experience is that the virtuous, the man who obeys the commandments of God, is the happy man in the community, not the transgressor. "If you will look...and see the dreadful calamities which afflict the wicked, you will see, that God has inseparably connected sin with misery, and righteousness with happiness in the present life." And, possibly thinking of some of his Universalist as well as orthodox opponents, he adds,

Hence then, when you are told that sin is not punished in this world, you must know it is false; and when

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1. Ibid., p. 14.  
2. Ibid., p. 39.

you are told virtue does not make a man happy in this world, you are told what every man knows to be untrue. When this doctrine is preached, the people are not fed with knowledge or understanding.<sup>1</sup>

This appearance was the first in a long series. Hosea travelled to New York and Philadelphia periodically for the rest of his life, and was at times tempted to move to that area.

A yearly event in his life, since he joined the movement, was the Universalist General Convention held each September. From 1791 to 1825 he never missed a session.<sup>2</sup> And after that it was a very rare occasion when he was not able to attend. He found these moments of sharing very stimulating. The brethren became so accustomed to his presence that it was established practice to reserve the last sermon of the Convention for Brother Ballou. He many times served as moderator or clerk of the gathering. It was as moderator of the General Convention of 1822 at Warner, New Hampshire, that Hosea had the fatherly pleasure of granting his own son Massena Berthier, then twenty-one, a "letter of fellowship."<sup>3</sup> Massena was not to be as distinguished a preacher as his father but he served the cause long and well.

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1. Ibid., pp. 136-137.

2. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, II, 332n.

3. Ibid., II, 209.

## CHAPTER XV

### ULTRA-UNIVERSALISM

In his Treatise on Atonement Hosea Ballou had written that the atonement of Christ was never intended to "perform impossibilities."<sup>1</sup> It could not be expected to transform men's lives and make them agree and live in peace with each other if they were destitute of love. The truth of this proposition was amply demonstrated in the Universalist denomination itself in what came to be known as the "Restorationist Controversy."

In the early years of Universalism the great task was to overcome the arguments of the partialists, men who claimed that God was partial and would save relatively few of His children and doom the rest to endless punishment in the future life. There was little concern with the question of whether there was any punishment in the after life or whether there was sufficient retribution for men's sins in the here and now. The accent was on overcoming the claims of orthodoxy.<sup>2</sup> Although it appears that Caleb Rich as early as 1816 denied a punishment in the hereafter, arguing that the

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1. H. Ballou, Treatise on Atonement, pp. 126-127.

2. Letter from Hosea Ballou to Thomas Whittemore, February 25, 1829. Whittemore, Modern History of Universalism, p. 437n.

corruptions of the flesh would be done away with the dissolution of the body and the return of the heavenly nature of man to the Father,<sup>1</sup> the question did not come into prominence until the correspondence between Hosea Ballou and Edward Turner was published in The Gospel Visitant in the 1817-1818.<sup>2</sup>

There is no question that much of the agitation which resulted from this correspondence was due to the restless Jacob Wood. Indeed, while the debate was in progress he published A Brief Essay on the Doctrine of Future Retribution in which he refuted both the exponents of eternal punishment and the believers in no future punishment.<sup>3</sup> He took a position in favor of limited punishment in the hereafter. Quoting the great men of the past--Relly and Chauncy--he attempted to show that the doctrine of no future retribution gave "encouragement to sin." Wood then went on to use most undiplomatic language:

I will not call those who believe in this system "stupid animals," and "regret the time spent in writing to them," as a modern Universalist writer has, but I really think the opinion very erroneous. The many gross absurdities to which the doctrine of immediate universal salvation is liable, and the vicious effects which it is calculated to produce, render it a doctrine justly deserving of disapprobation and contempt.<sup>4</sup>

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1. As told to Russell Streeter. W. S. Balch, "Caleb Rich," Universalist Quarterly, (New Series) IX (January, 1872), p. 76.

2. See Chapter XI of this study.

3. Eddy, History of Universalism, II, 266.

4. Jacob Wood, A Brief Essay.... quoted by Ibid., p. 267.

To his essay Wood added "An Appendix containing extracts of Letters from most of the Principal Universalian Ministers in New-England on the subject of Future Misery."<sup>1</sup> He claimed to have received answers from practically all of the ministers of the denomination and that for "a very few exceptions" they all took a position similar to his own on the subject.<sup>2</sup> Hosea Ballou, 2d, who unlike his grand uncle always retained a belief in a future state of retribution, later claimed that except for the letters of Dean and Turner which were written expressly for the purpose, Wood published them without the consent of the writers.<sup>3</sup>

In September of 1817, two weeks or so after the publication of his essay, Wood's Charlton Church played host to the General Convention. Wood at that time attempted to round up support in order to bring the question before the Convention. If the Convention would not take a stand in favor of restorationism (as his side of the question came to be called) a secession was to be staged. He, however, did not introduce the subject--as he had led his colleagues to believe he would.<sup>4</sup>

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., p. 268. The extracts published were from letters of Edward Turner, Thomas Jones, Sebastian Streeter, Paul Dean, Samuel C. Loveland, David Pickering, James Babbit, Hosèa Ballou, 2d, Jonathan Wallace, Robert Bartlett, and Russell Streeter.

3. Universalist Magazine, IV, 126.

4. Ibid.

When Hosea Ballou moved to Boston he brought with him his new opinions regarding punishment. As has been seen, his first published sermon in Boston was a forthright declaration that the sins of men are punished in this life--not in the hereafter.<sup>1</sup> This was just the first of a long line of sermons dealing with the same subject. The problem was discussed in a vigorous manner in several of his Lecture Sermons, in one of which he actually refers to his published controversy with Turner.<sup>2</sup> Hosea believed that the hell mentioned by Jesus was in this world. There is nothing to indicate, he says, that Jesus was not referring to hell on earth when he spoke the words:

And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched;--Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

It is evident to Hosea from such passages "that a state of extreme trouble and affliction is, in the language of scripture, called hell."<sup>3</sup>

Essentially, Hosea's was the Old Testament attitude that the Lord rewards men for their actions--in this life. He always insisted that the lot of the wicked is a hard one, that because there was no punishment in an after-life man did not

1. See Chapter XII of this study.  
 2. H. Ballou, Lecture Sermons, pp. 368ff.  
 3. Ibid., p. 211.

escape the consequences of his actions. He often went beyond this and stressed the position that actually virtue and wickedness hold reward or punishment in themselves.

...As a man loves the truth, and speaks the truth, he enjoys the divine sunshine in his breast; and in addition to this sure and ample reward he generally is believed by others, and confidence is placed in his word. In the same proportion as a man is honest in what he does, he has the enjoyment of his own conscience, which is a treasure that the honest man prizes far above silver or gold.

As wickedness is exactly the reverse of righteousness, so the recompense of the former must be the reverse of the latter.

If we have no love to God we cannot enjoy him. The thought that he exists and exercises universal dominion, and controls all things by his Almighty power is a source of infelicity. The soul, in room of being refreshed with the sweet waters of life is suffused with anger, wrath, strife, and bitterness. In the room of peace, there is trouble. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest; whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."<sup>1</sup>

Although he was, as always, outspoken on this matter in his own pulpit, he exercised great restraint in his handling of this subject in the Universalist Magazine. He may have realized the potentiality for great harm to the denomination that a dispute on this subject held. At any rate, during the first two years of his editorship there is barely a mention of the idea of no future retribution.<sup>2</sup> In his dispute with the editor of Kaleidoscope, who challenged him on this point, Hosea wrote

1. Ibid., pp. 295-296.

2. The three instances enumerated have been pointed out by Eddy, History of Universalism, II, 272-273. The present writer believes that Eddy is correct in limiting these to three.

simply: "We are sensible we cannot prove that sin and misery will exist in a future state of being."<sup>1</sup> In addition, he reprinted from The Gospel Visitant his exegetical labor on I Peter 3:18-20,<sup>2</sup> of which he was no doubt quite proud, and printed a compendium of a sermon which he had delivered at School Street.<sup>3</sup> Not believing that his views on this matter were essentials which all Universalists must hold, he made little of it in the newspaper.<sup>4</sup>

In an answer to one of the correspondents of the Magazine at the beginning of October, 1820, Hosea mentioned that the "impaired state" of his health would force him to keep his reply brief.<sup>5</sup> His bad health appears to have continued into the next year. He suffered from indigestion and from pains in his back and near the heart, which led him to believe that he had heart trouble.<sup>6</sup> Soon his mental moods were affected; when not under the tension of sermon preparation or stimulated by the conversation of friends, he suffered from depression. The doctors decided that it was not heart trouble that was bothering him, but an over-taxed mind which in turn affected his digestion. He would have to slow down and reduce the number of

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1. Universalist Magazine, I, 31.
  2. Ibid., I, 109-110, 113
  3. Ibid., II, 154-55.
  4. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, II, 161.
  5. Universalist Magazine, II, 58.
  6. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, II, 160.

his activities.<sup>1</sup> Under the circumstances, he decided to give up the editorship of the Magazine. He announced his decision at the conclusion of Volume Two in June of 1821. But he promised "an undiminished ardour for the promotion of that heavenly doctrine, so honorable to God, so consoling and edifying to every true believer...."<sup>2</sup>

The editorship of the Magazine was given to one Foster who, it is said, was "improperly recommended to Mr. Bowen," the publisher. Foster, in the opinion of Whittemore, "was utterly ignorant of Universalism, and every other kind of theology, and unfit, in every respect, for such a post."<sup>3</sup> This estimate is born out by what happened to the Magazine during his tenure. Where Hosea had been careful to keep to a minimum mention of the problem of future retribution, there was a great proliferation of letters and pieces on the subject under Foster. On page one of the very first issue under his direction the dogs were let loose.<sup>4</sup> Under various noms de plume Turner, Wood, Ballou (both Hoseas), Dean, the editor himself, the clever Dr. John Brooks of Bernardston, and others--carried on a heated

1. Ibid., p. 161.

2. Universalist Magazine, II, 207. Whittemore gives conflicting accounts of the reason for Ballou's suspension of his editorial labors. In the Life of Ballou, II, 161-162, he says that it was "in consequence of some honorable difference of opinion between him and the publisher...." It may have been a combination of both.

3. The Early Years, p. 311.

4. Letter from "EAR," Universalist Magazine, III, 1.

debate on the question. Each side calls on the other, throughout the debate (and the controversy which grew out of it), to prove its position from the Bible; each claims it is the duty of the other. It is interesting that the nom de plume under which Hosea Ballou wrote was the initials "H.B."- there was no mistaking those initials!

After the initial explosion, the heat died down; debate over the question of future punishment disappeared from the pages of the newspaper from the middle of August to December, 1821, although its columns were filled with other controversial matters. That the controversy was not over became apparent when, in December, letters appeared from believers in no future punishment. From this time on, letters and replies sprung up "like weeds" in its columns.

Hosea Ballou, never able to resist answering what he considered bad reasoning, wrote a review of a recent pamphlet on final restoration of souls after a period of future punishment.<sup>1</sup> For these comments he was bitterly attacked by Jacob Wood, writing under the nom de plume REASON.<sup>2</sup> Hosea answered, showing REASON to be unreasonable, bad tempered, and a distorter of facts.<sup>3</sup>

It was Wood who, over the name of "Restorationist," made certain "proposals"-which became the occasion of even greater

1. Ibid., III, 97.

2. Under the name "REASON." Ibid., p. 125. Identified as Wood by Eddy, History of Universalism, II, 274.

3. Universalist Magazine, III, 131.

controversy than had arisen thus far.<sup>1</sup> Writing in March, 1822, in behalf of himself and several brethren, he said he wished the controversy to avoid the nature of "a desultory, promiscuous newspaper dispute" which he believed it had been up to that point. To this end he had certain proposals to make.

1. That a brief statement of the evidence that all misery is confined to this life, be written by one who believes in that doctrine, and published in the Magazine, and that we will engage a similar communication in proof that misery will extend beyond death. [Footnote: "It is understood that this evidence will be both positive and negative. That is, each party shall have right to anticipate the contrary arguments, and refute them."]

2. That both these communications shall be lodged in the hands of the Editor of the Magazine before either is published, so that no alterations may be made in them afterwards, by reference one to the other.

3. That both these communications shall be submitted to the public to draw their own conclusions, without any controversial replies on either side.<sup>2</sup>

As inadequate as many correspondents found these proposals, they may have been accepted as the work of a sincere group of peacemakers if Wood had not added, in his characteristically insulting manner, the hope that "If the advocates of the doctrine of no future misery are honorable and conscientious in their cause, they will be willing to meet us on this just and equal ground." That Wood had Hosea Ballou in mind when he made this statement is seen when he added,

It is wished that the gentleman who shall accept this invitation, will be one who is qualified to do full

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1. Ibid., pp. 150-151.

2. Ibid., p. 151.

justice to his side of the question; and we hope that honor will restrain all others from interfering.<sup>1</sup>

That Hosea considered this a slap at himself is clear from his letter to the editor in the following issue in which he writes that if the framer of the proposals will reveal his real name and the name of his brethren, Hosea will inform them why he will not accept their proposals and "give them and the public to understand what I think of their suspending my honor and sincerity on the condition which they suggest."<sup>2</sup> Wood replied that if Hosea could give a good reason for wanting to know his name and the names of his friends he will give them, but he believes that anyone "who is sincere and honorable in his cause, will not hesitate to defend it in opposition to any signature."<sup>3</sup> The haggling over names and "honor" continued<sup>4</sup> while other correspondents fought over whether the "proposals" were adequate, whether they would not unfairly choke off debate, and related matters.

Meanwhile, Henry Bowen was receiving numerous complaints from readers who were tired of seeing the paper filled with unprofitable controversy.<sup>5</sup> He turned to Hosea to once more take over the editor's chair. Hosea agreed, but it seems that he insisted on help. In the first issue of the Magazine in

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1. Universalist Magazine, III, 151.
  2. Ibid., p. 154.
  3. Ibid., p. 166.
  4. Ibid., pp. 170, 179.
  5. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, II, 193.

May, 1822, Bowen announced that Hosea Ballou would resume the editorship with two associates, Hosea Ballou, 2d, of the Roxbury church, and Thomas Whittemore of the church at Cambridgeport.<sup>1</sup> The two junior editors--Hosea abstained because of his personal involvement--called off the debate which had been raging over the Wood proposals, but they carefully pointed out to their readers that any and all communications on the more important subject of future punishment would be printed.<sup>2</sup> (This distinction is important in the light of charges later made by Wood.) Wood wrote a severe letter the "substance" of which was reproduced editorially by Hosea, 2d, and Whittemore. "Restorationist" claimed he had been misunderstood by the editors. Further, he asked why his replies to several correspondents had not been printed, and threatened to use the columns of another paper if not accomodated by the Magazine. The junior editors explained why they did not insert the letter verbatim: "...It is addressed to us in a style which approaches too near that of mockery, to be received from any correspondent who does not give us his real name."<sup>3</sup> They politely add that if there be anyone who would care to accept "Restorationist's" proposals for debate, they will print the notice of such an acceptance.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 179.
  2. Ibid., p. 183.
  3. Ibid., p. 191.
  4. Ibid.

Despite Wood's threat to go somewhere else with his correspondence, he carried on in the columns of the Magazine a lengthy debate with Dr. John Brooks,<sup>1</sup> until, finally, in December a note from the editors announced that "for sundry reasons" they thought it best to end the controversies between Wood and Brooks, and others.<sup>2</sup> The editors apparently took this action because they were aware that the restorationist group made up of Jacob Wood, Edward Turner, Paul Dean, Barzillai Streeter, Charles Hudson, and Levi Briggs, had met and that an article had been prepared attacking their policy as unfair, and sent for insertion in the Christian Repository of Woodstock, Vermont.<sup>3</sup>

The Restorationists had held informal meetings at Wood's parsonage in Shirley.<sup>4</sup> It was agreed that a statement should be published concerning the editorial policy of the editors of the Universalist Magazine and that Jacob Wood should write it.<sup>5</sup> It is certain that Wood was seeking a secession from the denomination, but this "impetuosity" was restrained by Edward Turner who hoped that such a separation

1. Ibid.; III, 181, 198; IV, 10, 26, 46, 53, 71, 90.

2. Ibid.; IV, 102.

3. Eddy, History of Universalism, II, 282.

4. Letter of Edward Turner to his daughter, n.d. [but after his removal to Portsmouth in 1824] in Brooks, "Edward Turner," Universalist Quarterly, (New Series) VIII (July, 1871), 262.

5. Letter from Charles Hudson to E. G. Brooks, n.d. Ibid. (April, 1871), p. 179n.

could be avoided. Turner's attitude, however, was that "the controversy, if it did not soon subside, would end in" one.<sup>1</sup> He took the position that it was up to the editors of the Magazine to refrain from advocating the idea of no future punishment<sup>2</sup> and to "set a conciliatory example by refraining from controversy."<sup>3</sup> Party passions blind. The truth is that the Magazine carried correspondence on both sides of the issue.

The article which Wood wrote in behalf of the group was published in the Woodstock paper in December of 1822 and soon was referred to as the "Appeal and Declaration" because of the nature of its component parts. In his "Appeal" he claimed the believers in no future punishment (he called them a "party") used convention meetings, pulpit exchanges, etc., to force their opinions on Universalists who believe in future punishment.<sup>4</sup> He accused the editors of the Universalist Magazine of unfairness in their handling of the dispute and of choking off the controversy in such a way that their own side of the question was given the last word.<sup>5</sup> He spoke of the many attempts at reconciliation and the

1. Letter from Edward Turner to Russell Streeeter, January 21, 1823, in Ibid. (April, 1871), p. 180n.

2. Letter from Edward Turner to Russell Streeeter, October 24, 1822, quoted in Ibid. (April, 1871), p. 176n.

3. Letter from Edward Turner to Russell Streeeter, January, 1823, quoted in Ibid.

4. Reprinted in Eddy, History of Universalism,

5. Ibid., pp. 283-284.

Restorationists' desire for peace, but ended with the ominous words:

...Be it ever remembered, and I appeal to the foregoing facts to substantiate my assertion, that, if a separation be the final result, we did not seek it, and they must be considered as its legitimate authors.<sup>1</sup>

This "Appeal" was followed by a declaration "To the World" over Wood's signature. He speaks of the "modern corruption" that Universalism has suffered and claims that belief in "final restoration of all men by Jesus Christ, through faith and repentance" is quite a distinct doctrine from the belief in Universal salvation at the beginning of a future state. They are "incapable of being reconciled together." Belief in no future punishment is "subversive of a just sense of our accountability to God, and the proper distinction between virtue and vice, and, consequently, lessens the motives to virtue, and gives force to the temptations of sin."<sup>2</sup> In the "explanatory remarks" Wood added to the "Declaration" he used language not designed to conciliate brethren. He links the believers in no future punishment with "many ancient heathen philosophers" and claims that their system subverts the doctrine of salvation by Christ.<sup>3</sup> He attacks as "absurd" the belief that men, when freed of the body, will "come into the actual possession of their native glory"

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1. Ibid.; p. 287.

2. Ibid.; p. 289.

3. Ibid.

even without first having exercised repentance and faith.<sup>1</sup>

After the appearance of the Appeal and Declaration, the editors of the Magazine attempted to persuade the Restorationists to withdraw it, but to no avail.<sup>2</sup> Edward Turner later wrote to his daughter that

The editors of the Magazine complained biterly, and charged us with breaking fellowship with them. This we denied. I offered to submit the whole affair to Committees chosen from our respective parishes, and abide their decision. They refused, and immediately published "a Reply" to our "Appeal and Declaration."<sup>3</sup>

The Appeal and Declaration was reprinted in the Magazine on January 25, 1823, with a preface written by Hosea<sup>4</sup> on behalf of all three editors. He listed the names of those associated with it.<sup>5</sup> Despite the rhetoric, his words were sincere.

Christian brethren, it is a most painful agonizing task to put into your hands, what we know must produce in you surprise and grief of no ordinary character; but you are assured that this gall and wormwood has for years been tasted by those who saw the first germ of this root of bitterness. Yes, the shade of many a night has witnessed the anguish which preyed on the heart of him, who writes this notice, and his pillow has received the tears of grief occasioned by the increasing symptoms, which portended the unhappy schism, which is now made

1. Ibid., p. 290.

2. Universalist Magazine, IV, 125.

3. Letter from Edward Turner to his daughter, n.d. [but after his move to Portsmouth in 1824], Universalist Quarterly, (New Series) VIII (July, 1871), 262.

4. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, II, 215.

5. Levi Briggs soon disclaimed any concern with the Appeal, as did Barzillai Streeter. See Universalist Magazine, IV, 125, 135.

manifest to the public. We expect the daughters of the uncircumcised will triumph; but what is this in comparison with those inward sighs, which force our tears on the defection of those we love?-1

In the next issue the editors made their reply; it was from the pen of Hosea Ballou, 2d.<sup>2</sup> It is a stinging indictment of two and one half pages.<sup>3</sup> Hosea, 2d, reviews the controversy at length, reveals the names of the Restorationist group, condemns their use of the divisive term "party," and shows the utter inconsistency of the claim of Wood that the Restorationists had labored long for reconciliation and his statement that there can be no reconciliation of the doctrines of restoration and no future punishment.<sup>4</sup> He claims it was a breach of the rules of fellowship for the Restorationists to publish complaints against their brethren without first laboring with them. On several occasions the editors of the Magazine had tried in person to calm the troubled waters only to be rebuffed.<sup>5</sup>

The most severe part of Hosea, 2d's reply is his recounting of the devious tactics of Jacob Wood in his attempts to damage the reputation of Hosea Ballou and his School Street society. Wood boasted that Hosea Ballou "had got to come down" and complained that "nine tenths of Br. Ballou's

1. Ibid., p. 122.

2. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, II, 222n.

3. Universalist Magazine, IV, 125-127.

4. Ibid., p. 125.

5. Ibid.

society are infidels...." When Benjamin Whittemore, Mandana Ballou's future husband, asked Wood why Turner and Dean opposed Ballou, Wood attributed it to "ENVY." Said Wood, "Br. Whittemore, I know human nature so well as to know that envy is the cause of the impending schism." He also had told one of the editors of the Magazine of the envy of Turner and Dean toward Hosea Ballou. Hosea, 2d, goes on to accuse Wood of an attempt to organize a secession from the General Convention in 1817--this with the sanction of Dean and Turner. He points out the "harshness" of his Brief Essay of the same year. Turning to Dean, he writes "Mr. Dean has reported, secretly, that Mr. Ballou retained nothing of Christianity but the name...."<sup>1</sup>

With this stinging rebuke the public part of the controversy--for the moment--came to an end. Whittemore later wrote that the effect of the "Reply" had been "stunning."  
 "...It seems to have had the force of demonstration among the people." At any rate, the Restorationists made no public answer.<sup>2</sup> But behind the scenes there was much activity. In the middle of February, while Hosea was out of town, the Restorationists and the junior editors got together and reached a "settlement" of their differences. This was put in writing

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1. Ibid., p. 126.

2. Life of Ballou, II, 222.

and signed and was to be published in the Magazine.<sup>1</sup> In effect, it was a statement that neither side meant to injure the feelings nor the character of the other. This attempt at harmony failed, however, when Hosea got back to town. The "settlement" was not printed as scheduled. When questions were asked, the junior editors announced in the Magazine of March 15 that although they had signed an agreement with the authors of the Appeal and Declaration and agreed to publish it on February twenty-second, they later discovered misstatements of facts in the agreement. Furthermore, they realized they had no right to sign such an agreement without the senior editor, since they had agreed among themselves not to print anything regarding the Appeal and Declaration without the consent of all three.<sup>2</sup> What it was that Hosea said when he discovered that his friends had taken action without him can only be conjectured. The Restorationists claimed a breach of faith on the part of the junior editors and accused Hosea of putting stumbling blocks in the way of reconciliation. Turner later said that he made several attempts at reconciliation, but that "Mr. Ballou continued to declare that nothing short of a total retraction of our writings would

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1. Signed February 18, 1823. Text given by Brooks, "Edward Turner," Universalist Quarterly, (New Series) VIII (July, 1871), 263n.

2. Universalist Magazine, IV, 152.

satisfy him."<sup>1</sup> Hosea denied that he had done anything to influence the action of his colleagues. "I told them if they had subscribed to matters of fact to abide by their agreement; but they both said that what they had subscribed to was false. I then told them that they must see to that."<sup>2</sup>

The friendship of Hosea Ballou and Edward Turner was shattered. That it had been unaffected by the initial correspondence on future punishment is clear from the fact that they collaborated on the hymn book of 1821. But the machinations of Wood appear to have cast a shadow on that hallowed tie of twenty-five years. When at the height of the controversy Turner was dismissed from his church in Charlestown, he became convinced that it was due to the behind-the-scenes workings of the editors of the Magazine in conspiracy with one of the prominent families of his parish.<sup>3</sup> In February of 1824 he wrote a biting letter to Hosea:

That you are a man who preach [sic] with great eclat, and are attended by multitudes, I am sensible; but I have long since discovered that these things

1. Letter from Edward Turner to his daughter, n.d. [but after his removal to Portsmouth in 1824]. Quoted by Brooks, Universalist Quarterly, (New Series) VIII (July, 1871), 265.

2. Letter from Hosea Ballou to Edward Turner, Boston, May 22, 1827. Chambré, Universalist Quarterly, (New Series) X (January, 1873), 46.

3. Letter from Edward Turner to his daughter, n.d. [but after his move to Portsmouth, 1824]. Brooks, "Edward Turner," Universalist Magazine, (New Series) VIII (July, 1871), 270.

are not always to be envied, nor always the tests of a preacher's usefulness.<sup>1</sup>

Hosea mourned the loss of this friend, answering his letter several days later:

Had you been a young man, whose friendship I had enjoyed but a short time, the case would have been widely different; I could have endured it, and could have admonished you; but you were an old, tried friend, experienced in all matters which related to brotherly walk, and when I saw the ground you had taken, I returned home and to my pillow, and then gave secret vent to a heart broken with grief for the loss of a friend, who for more than twenty years had possessed my warmest affections.<sup>2</sup>

Attempt at reconciliation was complicated by the fact that in March of that year (1823), the Standing Committee of the Second Universalist Society of Boston passed a resolution to the effect that since Wood, Turner, and Dean had published charges against its Pastor and other Universalists of like thought without first attempting to reach an understanding, and since they had accused their Pastor of unchristian views "pernicious to the morals of Society," he should be requested not to exchange pulpits with these gentlemen until they had "recalled" their complaint.<sup>3</sup> Turner, since his dismissal from

1. Letter from Edward Turner to Hosea Ballou, Charlestown, February 4, 1823, in A. St. John Chambré, "Hosea Ballou and Edward Turner--A Contribution to the 'Truth of History,'" Universalist Quarterly, (New Series) X (January, 1873), 48.

2. Letter from Hoséa Ballou to Edward Turner, Boston, February 10, 1823. Ibid., pp. 48-49.

3. Records of the Second Universalist Society of Boston, March 9, 1823, quoted by Ibid., p. 43.

his church, had been preaching to a splinter group in Charlestown at the Town Hall. He resented the fact that Hosea would not exchange with him. In the light of Turner's unwise act in encouraging and preaching to a faction in his old church, and in the light of the resolution of the School Street Church, Hosea's refusal to exchange with him is certainly understandable.

As late as 1827 Hosea and Turner were exchanging letters on the subject of Turner's dismissal from Charlestown, the latter persisting in the belief that Hosea had had a hand in his downfall. Hosea appeals to him not to continue to believe and spread the story that he was at fault.

It is true I knew nothing of what you now inform me; but I hope, if you are sure that your statements are correct, that you are now convinced that I had nothing to do in that agency which caused your removal from Charlestown. You know that I never faulted you for your belief. I never complained of the tenets of your faith. I notice this, because several respectable brethren have told me that you and Mrs. Turner contend that I was the cause of your leaving Charlestown. If this information be correct, I hope you will both be generous enough to exonerate me from such a charge.<sup>1</sup>

The Southern Association meeting at Stafford, Connecticut took official cognizance of the Appeal and Declaration by unanimously voting to accept a report of a special committee that the Association express its disapproval of their

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1. Letter from Hosea Ballou to Edward Turner, June 11, 1827, quoted by Chambre, Universalist Quarterly, (New Series) X (January, 1873), 44-46.

action to the authors of the document. Paul Dean was the only one of the Restorationist group who had attended these Association meetings but he had left for home before this action was taken. The Association, therefore, voted a committee to communicate with the absent brethren and inform them of its action. At the next meeting of the Association at Milford six months later the committee reported that it had had no success. Later in the day, however, a feeling of good fellowship was in the air; a committee of reconciliation including Hosea Ballou was appointed to draw up terms of settlement.<sup>1</sup> A sweetly worded statement was the result. It was signed by the three Restorationists there--Edward Turner, Barzillai Streeter, and Charles Hudson.<sup>2</sup>

A settlement with Paul Dean was a little more difficult to obtain. His animosity to Hosea extended at least as far back as the latter's settlement in Boston. According to

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1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, II, 230-232.

2. Ibid., p. 232. For the text of the settlement see Chambre; Universalist Quarterly, (New Series) X (January, 1873), 47. Edward Turner later accused Hosea Ballou of holding out for stiffer terms than those presented. Hosea pointed out that in the committee meeting "I proposed that each should write his own mind, and then we would all read what was written. And if any one should be acceptable to all, that should be returned as the report of the Committee. All acceded sin to mine; and this was all the 'standing out' there was, as to me."--Letter from Hosea Ballou to Edward Turner, Boston, May 28, 1827. (Included in the Chambre article, p. 47.)

Whittemore, Hosea held out the olive branch to Dean until "it had withered in his hand." Getting no results, he lodged a complaint against him at the General Convention of 1823 at Clinton, Oneida County, New York. To offset the effect of this Charles Hudson, in turn, lodged a complaint against Ballou. The Convention, loath to take action in such a delicate matter, exonerated both of them. Dean immediately asked permission to withdraw from the fellowship of the Convention; his request was granted.<sup>1</sup>

The wound was healed, however, the following June (1824) at the meeting of the Southern Association held at Attleboro. Dean and Wood were both present. The latter agreed to the terms of reconciliation which had been signed by Turner, Streeter, and Hudson, at the previous meeting at Milford so the cause of complaint against him was removed. Dean, on the other hand, having quit the fellowship of the General Convention the year before, now sought readmission. The greater number present were in favor of admitting him. Hosea, eager to heal the wounds caused by the controversy, worked publicly and privately for his readmission. Among those opposed was Thomas Whittemore who could only see the seeds of future controversy in such action. It was not often that he was on the opposite side from Hosea, but in this case he felt

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1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, II, 235.

strongly that it was a mistake to grant Dean's application. Hosea took Whittemore aside and attempted to persuade him. "I believe," he said, "Brother Dean is sorry for what has happened; I cannot vote not to receive him; if we err at all, let us err on the side of forgiveness. Withdraw your opposition, Brother Whittemore, for my sake; perhaps the joys of former days will return."<sup>1</sup> Whittemore had his doubts, but he gave in. Dean was again given fellowship. Happy must have been the brethren as they looked up at the desk as Hosea preached, with Paul Dean and Jacob Wood, who were to offer prayers, on either side of him.<sup>2</sup>

Ostensibly, peace had been restored. Attention shifted from the conflict of personality to the realm of ideas. In 1827 Charles Hudson attacked Hosea's theories in A Series of Letters....<sup>3</sup> Hudson criticized Hosea's application of many texts, usually construed to refer to a future punishment, to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Hosea, showing unusual restraint, did not reply. In fact, he claimed in a letter to Abner Kneeland that he had not even read Hudson.

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1. As reported by Whittemore, Life of Ballou, II, 258.

2. Ibid.

3. Charles Hudson, A Series of Letters, addressed to Rev. Hosea Ballou, of Boston, being a Vindication of the Doctrine of a Future Retribution, against the Principal Arguments used by Him, Mr. Balfour, and Others (Woodstock: 1827).

As to the license and its latitudes, which the writer to whom you allude, has taken with my publications, I am unacquainted, having never read his work. Having been informed, by the best of judges, that it contained no new arguments on the merits of the subject to which it professes to be devoted, and having so often answered those which have been in use, I have not been disposed to go over grounds which I was sure would present neither fruits nor flowers, pleasant to the taste or eye.<sup>1</sup>

Walter Balfour, however, did reply. Balfour was a Scotch Presbyterian who had come from Scotland to Charlestown with letters of introduction to the Reverend Jedidiah Morse, the well-known opponent of liberalism in the Congregational order and founder of those twin institutions of reaction, Park Street Church and Andover Seminary. Balfour, for a time, preached in the Baptist Church but soon came under the influence of Universalists. In due time his conversion was noted in the columns of the Universalist Magazine.<sup>2</sup> He put his exegetical skill to work to prove that there was no such place as hell in the thought of the writers of Scripture. Thus, with Ballou, he came under the guns of the Restorationists. He carried on a lengthy debate with Hudson via the press.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Quoted by Eddy, History of Universalism, II, 321.

2. Universalist Magazine, IV (May 28, 1823), 196.

3. Walter Balfour, Three Essays: On the Intermediate State of the Dead, the Resurrection from the Dead, and on the Greek Terms rendered Judge, Judgment, Condemned, Condemnation, Damned, Damnation, etc., in the New Testament. With Remarks on Mr. Hudson's Letters in Vindication of a Future Retribution, addressed to Mr. Hosea Ballou of Boston (Charlestown: 1828).

Charles Hudson, A Reply to Mr. Balfour's Essays touching the State of the Dead and a Future Retribution (Wood-

Unfortunately for the Universalist denomination, words were soon again replaced by action. On January 1, 1831, Adin Ballou, later of Hopedale Community fame, began the publication of the Restorationist organ, The Independent Messenger. Much space was devoted to discussions of the advisability of withdrawing from the Universalist denomination.<sup>1</sup> Adin Ballou was soon involved in a heated controversy with Thomas Whittemore and his Trumpet, successor of the Magazine. This agitation, plus what was considered discriminatory action by the General Convention against the Restorationist-dominated Providence Association, led to the secession of the Restorationists in August of 1831.<sup>2</sup> Among their number were Jacob Wood, and Hosea Ballou's old antagonist, Paul Dean. Charles Turner was not involved. After a brief pastorate at Portsmouth following his removal from Charlestown, he had become a Unitarian and spent his closing years in various small churches.<sup>3</sup> The secessionists were not a large group; only eight ministers were involved.<sup>4</sup> There were many of restorationist sympathy, including Hosea Ballou, 2d, who

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stock, Vermont: 1829).

Walter Balfour, Letters on the Immortality of the Soul, the Intermediate State of the Dead, and a Future Retribution, in Reply to Mr. Charles Hundson, Westminster, Mass. (Charlestown: 1829).

1. Eddy, History of Universalism, II, 331f.

2. Ibid., pp. 330-332.

3. Brooks, "Charles Turner," Universalist Quarterly, (New Series) VIII. (April, 1871), 157-158.

4. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, III, 87.

remained loyal to the Universalist denomination. These men felt perfectly free to hold their own belief in fellowship with those who disagreed with them. The great swing in the denomination, was to the no future punishment view; Hosea appeared to be on the wave of the future.

This then, was the result of a correspondence between dear friends held in 1817-18.

## CHAPTER XVI

### "DEATH AND GLORY"

Hosea Ballou returned from a preaching visit to New York and Philadelphia in June of 1828 to find that his editorial chair had been taken away from him because of the activities of one of his disciples. Thomas Whittemore had been considering a move to either Philadelphia or Cincinnati but had finally decided to stay at Cambridgeport. But he found that his pastorate there did not provide sufficient activity to consume his boundless energy. Seeking more activity, he conceived the idea of publishing a bigger and better Universalist newspaper in Boston.<sup>1</sup> That this was unethical considering his connection as associate editor of the Universalist Magazine appears not to have crossed his mind. At any rate, he teamed up with Russell Streeter of the Watertown church and began mapping plans for a new paper.<sup>2</sup> When the announcement of their proposed venture was first issued in April, quite a stir was caused in Universalist circles in the Boston area. Many believed that Whittemore and Streeter were encroaching on the territory of Henry Bowen

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1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, II, 407.

2. Ibid.

and the Magazine.<sup>1</sup> Hosea Ballou, too, was very upset by the announcement. He believed that the field should have been left to Bowen, or that he, at least, should have been informed of the proposed publication before its announcement.<sup>2</sup> Whittemore in his biography of Ballou does not tell whether his old teacher and friend was personally affronted by his actions.

A compromise was reached between Whittemore and Bowen and the old paper was absorbed by the new<sup>3</sup> under the title of the Trumpet and Universalist Magazine. The first copy was issued on July 5, 1828. Unlike the old Magazine, the Trumpet was full newspaper size, carried advertising and dealt with secular as well as religious concerns. Under the vigorous editorship of Thomas Whittemore (Streeter withdrew after three months<sup>4</sup>) the paper was truly a "trumpet" in the Universalist Zion until Whittemore's death in 1861. Although Whittemore writes<sup>5</sup> that Hosea Ballou expressed his approval of the new paper, it is notable that he appears to have made no contribution to its columns for the first few years of its life. If he resented Whittemore's actions, he eventually became reconciled and contributed many letters,

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1. Ibid., p. 407.

2. Ibid.

3. Universalist Magazine, IX, 207.

4. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, III, 13.

5. Ibid., III, 13.

reviews, and articles.

Hosea was not long without an editorial post, however. His "cousin," Hosea, 2d. because of the success of his Ancient History of Universalism published in 1829, became convinced that the Universalist denomination was ready for a heavier and more scholarly fare than was being served by the existing papers and periodicals.<sup>1</sup> He convinced his publishers, Marsh and Capen, who were members of the School Street Church, of the feasibility of publishing a serious journal with articles of lasting interest to Universalists. So was born The Universalist Expositor. The first copy of the bi-monthly was issued in July, 1830, with the two Hosea Ballous as co-editors.<sup>2</sup> Many of the contributions of the elder Hosea are sermonic in quality, the presence of certain phrases indicating that they had been preached. Others of a more pretentious nature were written expressly for the Expositor. The contributions of Hosea, 2d, are of a scholarly nature.<sup>2</sup> At the beginning of Volume II, L.S. Everett joined the Ballous as a co-editor. This relieved the aging Hosea of the burden of having to do much writing in order to keep the columns filled; he made comparatively few contributions to the second volume.<sup>3</sup> But Universalists generally did not

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1. H. S. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, 2d, p. 143.

2. The Universalist Expositor (Boston: 1831), Vol. I.

3. Ibid., Volume II.

appreciate the Expositor; lack of patronage forced the suspension of publication at the end of the second volume.<sup>1</sup> But agitation, especially among the ministers, led to the revival of the journal by a different publisher in January of 1833. The new version, under the title of The Expositor and Universalist Review, was under the proprietorship of, and edited by, Hosea Ballou, 2d, and Thomas Whittemore.<sup>2</sup>

1833 was a notable year for Hosea. His oldest boy, Hosea Faxon, had decided to become a preacher. He had been farming in the summer and teaching in the winter, but now was anxious to join his father and brother, Massena, in proclaiming the gospel of God's love to man. On June 30 Hosea had the pleasure of giving the charge to his son at his ordination.<sup>3</sup> Hosea Faxon at thirty-three was tall, straight, and strong. People noted the "marked resemblance" he had to his father not only in his face and build but also in his mental characteristics.<sup>4</sup> He was to gain a dis-

1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, III, 131.

2. Ibid. The original Universalist Expositor, edited by the two Hoseas, was later considered valuable enough for a reprint to be made in New York in 1846.

3. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, III, 148-149.

4. John G. Adams, Fifty Notable Years. Views of the Ministry of Christian Universalism during the Last Half-Century, with Biographical Sketches (Boston: Universalist Publishing House, 1882), p. 92.

tinguished record of public service in Whitingham and  
Wilmington, Vermont.<sup>1</sup>

The General Convention of Universalists at a spirited meeting in 1832 voted to become a nationwide organization. Up to that point it had been mostly confined to New England. But now in 1833 sentiment was in favor of making it a "general" convention in fact as well as in name, with representatives from the various state conventions. Hosea's attitude was not registered, since he presided at the meeting as moderator.<sup>2</sup> At the meetings of the following year, the action was made official, and in 1834 the first General Convention of Universalists in the United States was held at Albany, New York. The honor of the moderator's chair was voted to the most distinguished preacher of the order, Hosea Ballou. It was a notable meeting, with fifty preachers present--a large number then.<sup>3</sup>

In November of this same year, Hosea made one of his frequent visits to Philadelphia. As had been done on his first visit to the city, the sermons Hosea preached were taken down in shorthand and published, this time by the

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1. Not only as preacher but as selectman, superintendent of schools, member of the state legislature, member of three constitutional conventions, justice of the peace, town clerk, road commissioner, president of a bank. A. Ballou, The Ballous in America, p. 326.

2. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, III, 122-123.

3. Ibid., pp. 169-199.

disowned Quaker Universalist Abel Thomas.<sup>1</sup> Abel Thomas in the preface to the Nine Sermons explains that he "exercised the privileges of an editor" in cutting out the repetitions and in expanding those sections which needed it in order "fully to express the meaning of the preacher."<sup>2</sup> So it is difficult to determine in these sermons how much is Ballou and how much is Thomas.

Hosea preached at both the Lombard Street and Callowhill Street Churches. The most interesting sermon in the group is actually a lecture which he delivered before the newly-formed Young Men's Universalist Institute; here he is seen in more formal address. The burden of his lecture consists of an exposition of the necessity of having knowledge of sufficient to combat the three opposers of Universalism-- Calvinists, advocates of Free Will or Arminians, and skeptics (those who have renounced Christianity and even deny the existence of the "First Cause").<sup>3</sup>

As the sixty-three year old preacher looked out on the young faces before him his mind ran back over his many years of experience preaching the gospel of Universal salvation. He could not but compare the past with the present.

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1. Hosea Ballou, Nine Sermons on Important Doctrinal and Practical Subjects, delivered in Philadelphia, November, 1834 (Philadelphia: 1834).

2. Ibid., p. iii.

3. Ibid., pp. 119-121.

...My young friends, be not discouraged at the embarrassments which lie around you. There are those who vindicate our doctrine, who have seen it in a very different state from what it is now. When your humble servant commenced his career in life, he does not know that he could count ten individuals who had opened their lips on this continent, in advocating our doctrines; and there were not more than two or three regular societies formed, professing to believe as we do. What a change has he lived to see! I have been engaged in the conflict for more than forty years, and I now invite you to enter on the prosecution of the work before you. I have not met with any thing, in all the means which have been arrayed in opposition to our faith, nor in all the errors which have existed, both on the right hand and on the left, that has produced one moment's discouragement in my mind. Perfect confidence in the truth of God, and in the fact that truth is great and will prevail, has inspired me with courage to go forward, and prosecute the Christian warfare.<sup>1</sup>

In a sense it can be said that the years 1832 to 1834 saw the completion of the theological system of Hosea Ballou. The latter part of 1832 saw the publication of his "Works," and in 1834 was published his detailed examination of the doctrine of future retribution. The Works included two volumes of sermons, the Lecture Sermons of 1818-1819, and a collection of "fugitives" under the title Select Sermons; and revised editions of the Notes on the Parables of the New Testament and A Treatise on Atonement.

The revised Notes of 1832 are, in some cases, quite different in their interpretation of the parables than the earlier editions. Hosea abandons the allegorical, cabalistical,

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1. Ibid., p. 134.

interpretation in some cases and uses a more natural approach, but the earlier view still mars much of the book. Hosea himself admitted in the preface that the revision was not as thorough as he would have wished. He pleaded lack of capability and lack of the good health and the leisure necessary to accomplish such a task. He was convinced, however, that those passages which were left untouched would not harm anyone for they were the result of honest conviction.<sup>1</sup> It is unfortunate that he did not have the time and energy to bring this edition more in line with his later thought.

In the case of the Treatise, Hosea was more thorough. From 1805 when it was first published to the edition of 1832, the text was left untouched. But now he attempted to bring it up-to-date. He does not completely recast it, for he wants to retain the language common people can understand.<sup>2</sup> Instead, he makes excisions from the old text of those elements of which he no longer approves, and, in some cases, rewrites paragraphs from his new point of view. This practice is bound to result in a certain unevenness of style where the reader moves from words written with his vocabulary of 1805 to those written in 1832.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Hosea Ballou, Notes on the Parables of the New Testament ("5th ed." [actually the 4th ed.]); Boston: 1832), pp. 5-7.

2. Hosea Ballou, A Treatise on Atonement.... (4th ed.; Boston: 1832), p. 12.

3. A particularly good example of this can be noted in Ibid., pp. 31-32.

A comparison of the editions of 1832 and 1805 reveals the extent of the change which had taken place in his thought over the years. A constant liberalization had taken place, bringing his thought closer to that of the liberal movement of the latter part of the nineteenth century. This modification is seen at work in the preface of the edition of 1828<sup>1</sup> where he expresses doubt concerning some of the things he was to change in the edition of 1832.

Ballou had made a distinction between the creation of man in Christ before his formation in the dust and had attributed the cause of sin to the carnal part of man's nature rebelling against the heavenly part. He has abandoned the fanciful conception of creation and formation in his theory but he still attributes the cause of sin to the carnal in man. It is man's desire which is responsible for sin.

Now want unsatisfied is an evil; and unsatisfied want is the first movement to action or volition. The motives which invite to action, owe their strength to the nature and strength of desire which want creates, and the moral character of the action depends on the character of the motive.<sup>2</sup>

Hosea does not abandon man to materialism, however. Although he was not created in Christ before formation in the dust, he still is basically of heavenly extraction. For man possesses a "law of moral, or spiritual life...."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Hosea Ballou, A Treatise on Atonement....(Hallowell: 1828), pp. xv-xvii.

2. Ibid., p. 32.

3. Ibid., p. 33.

This alteration in Ballou's thought was caused by a change more basic. He had come to the belief that Christ was not a pre-existent being. He admits that there are passages of Scripture which seem to favor the idea of Christ's pre-existence, but these do not appear strong enough to make such a belief a matter of faith. To hold such an opinion would be "mere speculation...."<sup>1</sup>

To bring the body of the Treatise into conformity with this belief, Hosea finds it necessary to cut out passages which represent Jesus as the eternal spirit of love, or logos, which was with God and was hidden "behind the letter of the law, and in the cabalistic allegories of the prophets, until it brake forth in the official character of Jesus...."<sup>2</sup> But Christ is not lower in his opinion because of this doubt of his pre-existence. Ballou still believes he was invested by God with majestic power capable of performing the great task of atonement. This change in Ballou's view of the pre-existence of Christ may have been due to the influence of the writings of Joseph Priestley. That Ballou was familiar with them is shown by the fact that he published Priestley's A General View of the Arguments for the Unity of God. From Reason, from the Scriptures, and from History in several installments

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1: Ibid., p. 12.

2: H. Ballou, Treatise on Atonement, Cf. 1805 ed., p. 115, with 1832 ed., p. 120.

in the Universalist Magazine in 1819.<sup>1</sup> It is not likely that he would have devoted so much space to this material if he did not tend to accept Priestley's arguments against the Arian view of Christ, and against the idea of his pre-existence.

In one other important area the 1832 edition differs from his early thought. It is in the area of punishment for sin. Where Hosea had used an allegorical explanation of the coming of the Son of man with fire, and believed that this was a figurative way of saying that the chaff of man's nature was consumed by the fire, or love, of God, he now interprets these passages to refer to the judgment which came on the generation of Jesus. Since Jesus said these things would happen in the lifetime of his disciples, he was, Hosea now believed, referring to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

The whole question of future punishment was the subject of a separate book which appeared two years later. In An Examination of the Doctrine of Future Retribution<sup>2</sup> he set forth his views so that

when the time shall come, as he believes it will, when people in general will number the tenet of future punishment among those corruptions of

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1. Universalist Magazine, I, 73-74, 77-78, 81-82, 85.  
 2. Hosea Ballou, An Examination of the Doctrine of Future Retribution, on the Principles of Morals, Analogy, and the Scriptures (Boston: 1834).

Christianity, which will then be abandoned, it may be known that the writer disbelieved it in his day; and also that the arguments with which he opposed it may then be known.<sup>1</sup>

Ballou knew that he would be accused of pouring fuel on the flames of the Restorationists by publishing such a book, but he took the position that each had the right to think his own thoughts and to publish them to the world. He will not hold his brethren less warmly in his affections if they do not agree with his position and he would never withhold fellowship from anyone who disagreed with him on this point.<sup>2</sup> It is a very happy thing that in the Universalist denomination each man is free to think and to speak for himself.<sup>3</sup>

Hosea argues his case against future punishment on the basis of morals, analogy, and the Scripture. As might be expected, he devotes the greater part of his work to the arguments from Scripture. The moral argument is between those who would promote morals by "depending on a belief in a future state of rewards and punishment" and those who would promote morals by "teaching that all the reward we ought to expect, for a faithful discharge of our duty to God and our fellow-creatures, is found in the enjoyments which are

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1. Ibid., p. 8.
  2. Ibid., pp. 9-10.
  3. Ibid., p. 11.

necessarily connected with religion and duty" in the here and now.<sup>1</sup> He effectively uses an argument which he used in the Treatise to show that men are motivated to act by the hope of present happiness. The wicked person is such because he expects the reward of his actions here and now. The wicked person obviously does not have a true picture of religion and morality; he needs to be persuaded "that righteousness brings an ample reward, in the present life."<sup>2</sup> It cannot be denied that the great bulk of sinners in this world have been taught to believe in the reality of future rewards and punishments. Obviously the threat of future punishment has been no deterrent to sin.

...The expectation of enjoyment in the present state, has carried them on in the strong current of sin, which has broken down every barrier, and furnished conclusive proof that no motive is so sure of inducing to action, as the expectation of immediate happiness.<sup>3</sup>

Love for the good cannot be induced by fear. Anyone who understands the human mind will recognize that man cannot be made to love (in this case, the Creator) by the threat of punishment.<sup>4</sup> The preaching of future rewards and punishments in order to persuade people to love God "is not only useless, but pernicious." For, no matter how well intended, the

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1. Ibid.; pp. 14-15.

2. Ibid.; p. 18.

3. Ibid.; p. 19.

4. H. Ballou, Examination of the Doctrine of Future Retribution, pp. 22-23.

preacher is, in effect, saying that in themselves God and morality are not of worth but "unlovely, and unworthy of being loved...."<sup>1</sup>

It is the task of the divines to instill in man a fear of sin, but instead, they have fallen into the mistake of believing "that the evil of sin is not in sin, but in a punishment" of a future state. If sin looms large in the individual's mind as an evil, so much more will he attempt to avoid sin. As it is, he is intent on not avoiding sin, but avoiding punishment—both here and hereafter.<sup>2</sup>

As he had contended in the Treatise, Hosea contends here that the idea of God that a man possesses affects his own character. The "human heart is capable of becoming soft, or hard; kind, or unkind; merciful or unmerciful, by education and habit." The orthodox picture of infernal torment has hardened the hearts of believers until they have acted toward their fellow mortals in the same wrathful manner that they expect of the heavenly Father.<sup>3</sup>

The moral argument, then, is against those who would use the threat of future punishment to promote virtue in the here and now. Hosea next turns to the arguments of analogy

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1. Ibid., p. 24.
  2. Ibid., p. 28.
  3. Ibid., pp. 35-36.

used by the proponents of future punishment. He claims he is hesitant to discuss this subject for fear of misrepresenting its proponents since they have not as yet come forth with a systematic presentation of their point of view. He feels it safe, however, to define the position of these persons thus: They

hold that in all respects, which are necessary to carry sin and its miseries into the future state, that state will be analogous to this mode of being. So that, reasoning from analogy, as moral agents sin, and thereby render themselves miserable in this world, the same moral agents may continue to do the same in the world to come. In connection with this argument it is urged, that as it is evident to our senses that sin often escapes a just retribution in this world, it must be recompensed in another state, or divine justice must forever be deprived of its claims.<sup>1</sup>

The divines who use this argument of analogy are basically inconsistent. They tell their hearers that sin in this world procures for "its agents the riches and honors" of life, at the same time that it escapes detection and punishment. If these gentlemen were consistent, they would see that if they use the argument of analogy between this and a future state, the same conditions would persist and the sinner would get away with as much there as here. Furthermore, if they argue that divine justice is never fully satisfied in this world, by analogy, they should see that the same would be true in the next world!<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., pp. 36-37.

2. H. Ballou, Examination of the Doctrine of Future Retribution, p. 37.

In this way we might proceed and make the future state precisely like the present; for we have no more authority for carrying sin and its miseries into a future world, than we have for carrying all other things into that state which we find in this.<sup>1</sup>

Reason leads us to believe that sin is the result of temptation. And if sin is to exist in a future world (as consistency--using the analogical argument--dictates) then temptation is to exist there also. And to argue that sin will exist there without temptation is altogether arbitrary--and contrary to analogy.<sup>2</sup> Ballou relentlessly follows his opponents with more examples of their inconsistency. The principle of analogy allows us to believe that just as in this state the good and pious are subject to a falling away from the good life, so will they be in a future world. Furthermore, the righteous in the next world will suffer for the unrighteous just as they do on earth.<sup>3</sup>

If the pious in this world are so distressed, as they profess to be, with the apprehensions which they entertain of the future sufferings of their wicked fellow-creatures, what must be their anguish hereafter, when they shall see, in awful reality, the sufferings which they now have only in prospect!<sup>4</sup>

To top off this argument, Ballou points out that by the principle of analogy--if consistent--his reader is forced to see that virtue and vice will continue from state to

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1. Ibid., pp. 37-38.
  2. Ibid., p. 38.
  3. Ibid., pp. 38-39.
  4. Ibid., p. 39.

state in the future, with the evil person in every state being threatened with punishment in still the next state.<sup>1</sup>

Turning to the usual arguments from Scripture, he raises the cogent question of why, if the doctrine of future punishment is true and necessary to piety,--why the information was not given to Adam. The Scripture reads:

"Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:16-17).

There is no indication that Adam was threatened with the "intolerable pains of hell in an eternal state, about which there is so much preached in our times." The only warning of punishment given Adam concerned punishment in this world: "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."<sup>2</sup> Adam and company were not told of a trial in eternity in which they would be judged for their earthly transgression. The Lord God took action immediately. The tempter he condemned to a life of degradation as the lowest of beasts, and of antipathy with mankind. The woman he sentenced to a life of multiplied sorrow, pain in childbirth, and subjection to man. Adam he sentenced to a life of hard labor on a land made difficult on his account (Genesis 3:14-19).<sup>3</sup> The progeny

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1. Ibid., p. 44.  
 2. Ibid., pp. 45-46.  
 3. Ibid., pp. 47-48.

of Adam, furthermore, are at no time warned of a future retribution.<sup>1</sup>

In like manner Ballou rehearses the long catalogue of the sins of the Old Testament characters--sins which grew worse as time passed--and nowhere does he find a future retribution threatened; but, rather, punishment is imposed in this world.<sup>2</sup> He takes his readers to the mount of Sinai with Moses and his Israelites.

We shall now learn, no doubt, the mind of God respecting the demerit of sin and the severity of its just punishment. We can hardly expect to go from this mountain ignorant of those divine sanctions which will best serve the cause of piety, religion, and moral virtue. The lightnings have flashed! the thunders have rolled! God has spoken! the verdict of heaven is registered! Come, ye doctors, who insist that neither judgment nor punishment is in this world--and who, without hesitation, doom your fellow-sinners to endless wo,--come and read the following verdict: "Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe."--(Exodus xxi. 23-25.) All this is evidently in this world, where life can be taken, where eyes can be destroyed, where teeth can be extracted, where hands and feet can be amputated, where burnings, wounds, and stripes can be inflicted.<sup>3</sup>

Finally arriving at the generation of Jesus, Ballou claims that he was in the line of the prophets in expecting retribution in his own time--and not in a future state.<sup>4</sup> He said that his disciples would not die before the Son of man came

1. Ibid., p. 49f.
2. Ibid., pp. 51ff.
3. Ibid., pp. 60-61.
4. Ibid., p. 80.

on the clouds of heaven.<sup>1</sup> There is no basis for believing the references of Jesus to "hell fire" (a gehenna of fire) should be taken to refer to a future state. Rather, Jesus used these references to the town dump in the valley of Hinnom "symbolically" to refer to "spiritual punishment in this world." These statements are supported by the testimony of Dr. Adam Clarke and Parkhurst, who were themselves believers in future punishment.<sup>2</sup> It is obvious that the Scribes and the Pharisees understood Jesus, when he referred to the "damnation of Gehenna," to be speaking in the manner of their prophets, that is, of the present life. Jesus was referring to the coming destruction of Jerusalem, an earthly event.<sup>3</sup>

Ballou then incorrectly interprets the many references to the Second Coming in the New Testament letters of Paul and "Peter," and in the Revelation, as predictions of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. He interprets these in the light of the various apocalyptic sayings of Jesus in the gospels.<sup>4</sup> Mistaken though he may have been in this detail, he at least recognized that these passages do not refer to a judgment in an after-life but to an earthly event.

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1. Ibid., pp. 77-79.
  2. Ibid., pp. 80-82.
  3. Ibid., pp. 86-88.
  4. Ibid., pp. 89-91.

Having considered the doctrine of future retribution from the points of view of morals, analogy, and the Scriptures, Ballou concludes his work by reprinting several of his letters and articles on the subject which appeared in periodicals. The most interesting of these is a letter "To a Friend Who Had Written Him on the Subject of 'Death and Glory.'" In this letter, Ballou accepts the implications of a term which was to become one of disrepute in Universalist circles. He knows not, he writes, if there is a period of unconsciousness between death and the resurrection state, as Priestley contended. But he does know this: there is no scriptural basis for belief in a "moral state" between death and the resurrection state so it is

immaterial whether we enter, immediately, after the dissolution of the body, on the resurrection state, or sleep in unconscious quietude any given time before that glorious event shall take place. In either case, it is what you call "death and glory;" for it makes no difference as to the length of time during an unconscious state. In such a state there can be effected no moral preparations.<sup>1</sup>

It was possible for Ballou to accept the "death and glory" conception because of his very exalted view of man. As the offspring of the heavenly Father, man, when he was rid of carnal desire at the dissolution of the body, would

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1. H. Ballou, Examination of the Doctrine of Future Retribution, pp. 182-183.

return to that heavenly state from which he came. But, as has been wisely pointed out, "His main contention was not the one which linked death and glory, but one which bound together life and judgment."<sup>1</sup>

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1. John Coleman Adams, Hosea Ballou and the Gospel Renaissance of the Nineteenth Century (Boston: Universalist Publishing House, 1903), p. 18.

## CHAPTER XVII

### "SALVATION IRRESPECTIVE OF CHARACTER"

In the minister's study at the Arlington Street Church in Boston hang the portraits of William Ellery Channing and Hosea Ballou.<sup>1</sup> The Second Universalist Society in Boston is now federated with the Unitarian church which in Channing's day stood on Federal Street; two churches of like belief brought together after years of separateness. In the same manner the two parent denominations of these churches are working together in many areas and are exploring the possibilities of merger. Unitarians are now Universalists; Universalists have, almost from the beginning, been Unitarians.

Hosea Ballou was unitarian in belief before the Unitarian movement began. He delivered his first sermon on a unitarian basis as early as 1795.<sup>2</sup> By the year 1805, by his argumentative power, he had converted the Universalists as a whole to the new position. His A Treatise on Atonement of that year contained a forthright, hard-hitting attack on the doctrine of the trinity and advocated a unitarian, or better, Arian, view of Christ.

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1. The Ballou portrait is by H. C. Pratt, painted in 1847.  
2. See Chapter V of this study.

The Congregationalist rebel Jonathan Mayhew poked fun at the "Athanasians" in 1755<sup>1</sup> and, with Charles Chauncy, took an Arian position regarding the nature of Christ.<sup>2</sup> In the middle 1780's the Episcopal King's Chapel in Boston began its evolution to Unitarianism under the leadership of James Freeman. Although the seeds of liberalism were sprouting in Boston earlier, it was not till 1805 that Unitarianism can be said to have begun a definite existence. In that year the election of the liberal Henry Ware to the Hollis Professorship of Divinity at Harvard College precipitated the first skirmish in the Unitarian Controversy. But not till ten years later were the liberals on the whole ready to accept the name Unitarian. In 1815 was published in pamphlet form American Unitarianism, excerpts from the English Unitarian Thomas Belsham's Memoirs of the Life of the Reverend Theophilus Lindsey which showed that Unitarianism was being spread among New England Congregationalists in a furtive manner. This pamphlet was reviewed in a biting article in Jedidiah Morse's reactionary magazine, the Panoplist. The storm which blew up over this review, including the exchange of several "letters" between William Ellery Channing and Samuel Worcester of Salem,

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1. Conrad Wright, The Beginnings of Unitarianism in America (Boston: Starr King Press, 1955), pp. 204-205.  
2. Ibid., p. 209.

is usually considered the second phase of the Unitarian Controversy. By the time Channing delivered his definitive statement of Unitarian Christianity in Baltimore in 1819, the Unitarians can be said to have become a distinctive group, although formal organization of the American Unitarian Association did not take place till six years later.

It would be logical to assume that when Hosea Ballou came to Boston's School Street Church in 1817 he would have been welcomed by the Unitarians as an ally. Such, however, was not the case. There were several reasons for this. The Unitarians did not desire to be classed as Universalists by their orthodox brethren. Their liberalism did not carry them to the point of accepting Universal salvation. They were anxious to conciliate whenever possible the conservative wing of Congregationalism. Their heresy regarding the nature of Christ was radical enough; to be considered Universalists was unthinkable. When a New York preacher charged the Unitarians with holding Universalist beliefs, Henry Ware, Junior, called it an "unfounded" and "cruel accusation."<sup>1</sup> Very few were the Unitarians who would take the position of James Walker, later President of Harvard, but in 1823 minister of the Unitarian church in Charlestown:

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1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, II, 90. See the comments of Hosea Ballou, Universalist Magazine, II, 18-19.

If by "everlasting punishment" is meant "the proper eternity of hell-torments," it is a doctrine which most Unitarians of the present day concur in rejecting; some understanding, by that "everlasting destruction" to which the wicked are to be consigned, an absolute annihilation; others conceiving of their sufferings as consequential, and indefinite as to their duration; and others, that all punishment will be remedial, and will end at last in a universal restoration to goodness and happiness.<sup>1</sup>

It can be seen from this last that some of the Unitarians were tending toward restorationism. This explains why the Restorationist secessionists from the Universalist denomination eventually were welcomed into the Unitarian fold.<sup>2</sup>

A second reason that the Unitarians avoided association with Universalists was social. The Unitarians generally were of the higher social class in New England; their ministers were Harvard literati, who were offended at the unlearned Universalist clergy.<sup>3</sup> The Universalists generally were, as Professor Alfred S. Cole has pointed out,<sup>4</sup> "a motley group." While the Unitarians were a homogeneous group in the established church, the Universalists were "come-outers" from all denominations. The crudeness, even vulgarity, of some of the Universalist preachers "excited disgust, and assisted in nullifying their influence."<sup>5</sup>

1. Article in The Christian Disciple, 1823. Quoted by Whittemore, Life of Ballou, II, 237-238.

2. Adin Ballou writing in The Universalist, February 4, 1871. Quoted by Eddy, History of Universalism, II, 335-339.

3. Adin Ballou, Autobiography. Completed and Edited by his Son-in-Law, William S. Heywood (Lowell: 1896), p. 218.

4. Conversation with the present writer.

5. Foster, New England Theology, pp. 325-326.

This social reason for cleavage among the Unitarians and Universalists may explain the refusal of the Unitarians to exchange pulpits with the Universalists, although this reason was not recognized by the latter group at the time. Hosea Ballou favored pulpit exchanges among men of all shades of opinion--Calvinist, Arminian, and Universalist. He believed this was a way of promoting truth and doing away with error. The Unitarians, he claimed, exchanged pulpits with Congregationalists, Baptists, and other sects, but very seldom with Universalists. He believed that the Unitarian clergy were not afraid of orthodoxy in their pulpits for they knew their people rejected it, but they would not allow Universalism for fear their people would accept it.<sup>1</sup>

Hosea Ballou believed that the Unitarians were in fact Universalists. In the "Dialogue between a Universalist and a Limitarian" which appeared in the second issue of the Universalist Magazine<sup>2</sup> in 1819, the Limitarian complained that those who profess "liberal sentiments," that is, the Unitarians, were Universalists in disguise. That they were

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1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, II, 322. See also "Com-mendation and Reproof of Unitarians," Select Sermons, p. 333, in which he asks, concerning this practice of Unitarians, the prophetic question: "How will this appear in the history of these times, an half a century hence?"

2. Universalist Magazine, I (July 10, 1819), 6.

not willing to drop this disguise, must have pained him very much. But, he never condemned the Unitarians in a harsh manner; he seems to have had a love for them similar to that of a father for an erring child. He praised the Unitarians for the great advance they had made in divinity. They had come forward with the great Biblical teaching of the unity of God.<sup>1</sup> Because they recognized the fatherly love of God for his children, they had rejected such partial doctrines as those of election and reprobation,<sup>2</sup> and believed the doctrines of total depravity and regeneration untrue.<sup>3</sup> Man is capable of moral improvement in this life and does not need the power of irresistible grace to pull him upward. Ballou also commended the Unitarians for their insistence on the right of the individual conscience to interpret the Scripture by the light of reason. These beliefs of the Unitarians were very praiseworthy. But, he believed, they were not consistent. In the light of their liberal beliefs it would be expected that they advocated belief in Universal salvation, but such was not the case. In order to avoid the onus of the charge of being Universalists, Unitarian preachers would quote the Scripture passages which were mistakenly interpreted by the common layman to refer to everlasting misery

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1. H. Ballou, Select Sermons, p. 323.

2. Ibid., p. 324.

3. Ibid., pp. 325-326.

in the future life. They themselves, he was sure, knew that these passages were not opposed to Universalism but they were depending on the erroneous education of their hearers to interpret them that way. Many a time Ballou himself was thrilled by an uplifting sermon by a Unitarian minister. The preacher would paint in a thrilling manner the picture of the infinite benevolent Father who loves all His children and whose object in creation is to make them happy. And then "when the cheering light of this blessed doctrine shone about us, and in us, to such a degree as to lead us to think the preacher was about to remove the veil from his congregation at once, all of a sudden a deep wound was inflicted by the artful preacher" as he would quote one of the usual passages erroneously interpreted to refer to endless punishment.<sup>1</sup> This, to avoid being charged with believing in Universalism.

This problem of the inconsistency of the Unitarians faced Ballou shortly after he arrived in Boston. In the third and fourth issues of the Universalist Magazine<sup>2</sup> in 1819, he printed excerpts from Channing's great sermon at Baltimore which had been delivered on May fifth of that year at the ordination of Jared Sparks. Ballou writes that there is no doubt that Channing means to state a universalist position.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 329.  
 2. Universalist Magazine, I, (July 17, 1819), 9-10;  
 I (July 24, 1819), 13-14.  
 3. Ibid., p. 9.

He points out some of the passages which illustrate Channing's position, such as the words:

We believe that God is infinitely good, kind, benevolent, in the proper sense of these words; good in disposition, as well as in act; good, not to a few, but to all; good to every individual, as well as the general system.<sup>1</sup>

Ballou points out that since it is "impossible for God to be more than infinitely good to any, he must mean, that God is as good to every individual as he is to any." He also calls attention to passages in which Channing rejects "the false and dishonorable views of God" conceived by the orthodox.<sup>2</sup> But then Ballou has the painful task of exposing serious inconsistencies in Channing's statements concerning God. How can the God of love who is, as Channings says, "originally, essentially, and eternally placable, and disposed to forgive," a God who punishes only to correct, be reconciled with such statements as one in which Channing claims that Jesus uses, among other means, "threatenings against incorrigible guilt." Does Channing mean what he says? "Incorrigible means bad beyond amendment; and to talk of benevolently punishing the individuals who cannot be reclaimed really appears absurd." He believes that such serious inconsistencies expose Channing to the criticism of the orthodox. He hopes that Channing will present a clarification of "these mysterious statements."<sup>3</sup> Channing--as far as is known--never did.

1. Ibid., p. 10.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 14.

On two occasions Ballou took it upon himself publicly to reprove Channing. The first of these was in December of 1820 when he opposed him on the question of continuing the establishment of the Congregational Church in Massachusetts. At this period, of course, Channing's Federal Street Church, which was still Congregational in name, stood to benefit by the religious tax; the dissenting churches did not. The question came before the Constitutional Convention which met during late 1820 and early 1821.<sup>1</sup> The Constitutional Convention kept the religious provision, which was not done away with until 1834. Channing preached in favor of the establishment in December of 1820,<sup>2</sup> giving a glowing description of the importance of religion to society. Religion is a social principle, not just a personal matter between man and his God.<sup>3</sup> The individual gains his religion in society, says Channing; he does not bring it into the world with him.<sup>4</sup> "Therefore Society ought, through its great organ and representative, which is government, as well as by other methods, to pay

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1. Journal of Debates and Proceedings in the Convention of Delegates, Chosen to Revise the Constitution of Massachusetts, Begun and Holden at Boston, November 15, 1820, and Continued by Adjournment to January 9, 1821. Reported for the Boston Daily Advertiser (New Edition; Boston: Published at the office of the Daily Advertiser: 1853). [1st ed., 1820.]

2. William Ellery Channing, Religion a Social Principle. A Sermon delivered in the Church in Federal Street, Boston, Dec. 10, 1820 (Boston: 1820).

3. Ibid., pp. 5-6.

4. Ibid., p. 6.

homage to God, and express its obligation."<sup>1</sup> He calls for the entrusting to elected officials of the "power of providing religious instruction" as a means of supporting public morals.<sup>2</sup> Since religion is so important, it is entitled to "any grateful offering from the state which it upholds."<sup>3</sup>

Within ten days<sup>4</sup> Hosea had rushed into print with "strictures" on Channing's sermon.<sup>5</sup> His reply is quite restrained for the old debater. He praises Channing's exalted sentiments regarding "the foundation of pure and undefiled religion,"<sup>6</sup> and commends his ideas on the social nature of religion.<sup>7</sup> But then he, in his usual thorough manner, examines Channing's views in favor of the establishment of religion.<sup>8</sup> He points out very cogently that a glance at history will prove that legislation on religious matters has always corrupted Christianity.<sup>9</sup> What is the logic of Channing's thought? It seems to Ballou that

1. Ibid., p. 8.

2. Ibid., p. 15.

3. Ibid., p. 18.

4. See announcement of publication, Universalist Magazine, II (December 23, 1820), 103.

5. Hosea Ballou, Strictures on a Sermon entitled "Religion a Social Principle;" delivered in the Church in Federal Street, Boston, Dec. 10, by William Ellery Channing (Boston: 1820).

6. Ibid., pp. 3ff.

7. Ibid., pp. 5ff.

8. Ibid., pp. 7ff.

9. Ibid., p. 10.

If one set of religious sentiments ought to be supported by law, because they are of a social and salutary nature in society, there surely is the same reason for preventing by law the propagation of principles which are subversive of them.<sup>1</sup>

So, it is seen, it is very dangerous to tamper with religion by means of legislation. Furthermore, Channing should know that it is impossible to make men religious by law.<sup>2</sup> "...The internal principles of religion cannot be controlled' [sic] by legislation, and therefore stand in no need of its aid."<sup>3</sup>

There is no way of knowing if Ballou's comments had any affect on Channing's mind. That he thought better of his stand on established religion is sure. When Religion a Social Principle appeared in his Works, all mention of state support of religion was excluded; he retained only the section which he labelled the "Importance of Religion to Society."<sup>4</sup>

A much more serious difference arose between Hosea Ballou and William Ellery Channing over the question of the beliefs of Ultra-Universalists, the no future punishment school. In 1832 the Doctor delivered a discourse on The Evil of Sin<sup>5</sup> during the course of which it is impossible to believe he was not referring to Ballou. Channing maintains that sin sometimes prospers in this world, that it is not always punished here.<sup>6</sup>

1. Ibid., p. 11.

2. Ibid., p. 13.

3. Ibid., p. 15.

4. The Works of William Ellery Channing, D. D. To Which is Added The Perfect Life. One Volume, Complete (Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1886), pp. 187-188. [1st ed., 1841]

5. William Ellery Channing, "The Evil of Sin," Works, pp. 347-353.

6. Ibid., p. 350.

So it is obvious that retribution must be made. The idea of retribution "finds a response now in every mind not perverted by sophistry." Channing was much too polite to name names but there is no doubt that he was referring to Ballou when he criticized "some among us" who insist "that punishment is confined to the present state" and claim that "in changing worlds we shall change our characters; that moral evil is to be buried with the body in the grave." The Doctor notices this particular opinion because it "spreads industriously" and "tends to diminish the dread of sin...."<sup>1</sup> So Ballou found himself attacked even by the great Doctor Channing! A "more irrational doctrine," says Channing, he has never seen. It is plain from analogy (a position, as has been seen, attacked by Ballou later) that such a "sudden revolution" as the death and glory theory proposes would destroy a man's identity. There can be no on-goingness of man's mind from this state to the next if such a system is true.<sup>2</sup> Channing does not see how the dissolution of the body can affect, that is purify, the mind. "Why should the last grow pure from the dissolution of the first?"<sup>3</sup>

Channing is non-committal regarding the future state. Whether the soul which is evil will suffer complete extinction

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1. Ibid., p. 350.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Ibid., p. 351.

or will be reformed and made happy, he is not sure. On this question the Scripture "throws no clear light." But the sacred writings do impress upon the mind the terrible suffering which awaits the wicked soul.<sup>1</sup>

Ballou subjected this sermon of Channing to a "candid examination."<sup>2</sup> He said he was shocked with this sermon by the man whose talents and labors he has always esteemed so highly. As he realized that Channing was attacking himself and the doctrine" which is now so rapidly prevailing," he "felt a sinking, a momentary enervation of mind, and a morbid gloom seemed to obscure mental vision."<sup>3</sup> But Ballou soon recovered and decided to defend the goodness of God by pointing out Channing's contradictions.<sup>4</sup> The Doctor does not present one jot or tittle from Scripture to prove his assertions that both Christianity and nature teach that there is to be a greater misery after this life.<sup>5</sup> He regrets that Channing has not taken the opportunity to understand the doctrine he disputes against. Channing made the statement that "It is maintained by some among us, that punishment is confined to the present state; that in changing worlds we shall change our characters; that moral evil is to be buried with the body in the grave."

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1. Ibid., p. 353.

2. Hosea Ballou, A Candid Examination of Dr. Channing's Discourse on the Evil of Sin (Boston: 1833).

3. Ibid., pp. 4-5.

4. Ibid., p. 5

5. Ibid., pp. 6-7.

In place of these statements, if he had been rightly informed, he would have said, It is maintained by some among us that as neither scripture nor reason show to us that sin will continue beyond this state of flesh and blood, so neither do they prove that punishment for sin will so continue; that when we exchange worlds, and this corruptible puts on incorruption, our constitutions will be essentially changed, as is particularly described by St. Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians; and that we shall be equal unto the angels, and shall die no more, as Jesus testified to the Sadducees.<sup>1</sup>

It is a misrepresentation for Channing to say that Ballou maintains that moral evil will be buried with the body in the grave, "because he has no reason to believe this, and because it has too much the appearance of a canting throw at what he was not disposed to treat with his usual candor."<sup>2</sup> Channing, says Ballou, certainly has never read him to the effect that the death of the body has power to change the mind. This power is God's. "We never ascribed the power to change us from this state to another, to anything but God who raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead...."<sup>3</sup>

Ballou spends much space in exposing every inconsistency in Channing's sermon. He would like the Doctor to explain some of his statements. But Ballou does not expect him to "condescend" to do so.<sup>4</sup> There is no evidence that Channing ever had any personal relations with Ballou. Channing was aloof when it came to such a common person as Hosea Ballou. One of the Doctor's better biographers has said that his

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1. Ibid., p. 8.

2. H. Ballou, Examination of Channing's Discourse on the Evil of sin, p. 8.

3. Ibid., p. 9

4. Ibid., p. 11.

"aloofness cost him a good deal." He "had not that personal knowledge...that could qualify him for a just understanding" of Ballou.<sup>1</sup> Despite this lack of personal relationship, and despite the fact that Ballou--eminently a logician--believed Channing very inconsistent in his religious thinking, he always respected and spoke highly, at times reverently, of the "impassioned little saint."<sup>2</sup>

The basic difference between Ballou and the Unitarians such as Channing was on the question of salvation. Arminian from the beginning, as Unitarian thought developed it placed greater and greater responsibility on man. Its rallying cry became "salvation by character," that is, that a man comes closer to the possibility of salvation as he develops his character. Nothing could have been further from the thought of Ballou, who considered a rigid determinism not only logical but necessary to insure the salvation of every individual. This basic difference in attitude is vividly illustrated by an undated anecdote about Ballou. He had gone to an inland town on a preaching engagement. He had made arrangements to stay with a lady who, as it turned out, believed that men were

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1. John White Chadwick, William Ellery Channing, Minister of Religion (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1903), p.254.

2. Chadwick states that Channing's thought "drew nearer and nearer to Ballou." Ibid. This same opinion is expressed in a personal letter to the present writer from Channing's latest biographer, Professor Arthur W. Brown of Syracuse University, author of Always Young for Liberty. A Biography of William Ellery Channing (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1956). Brown, it is interesting to note, takes no notice of Ballou in his book.

to be saved for being good. Arriving at the house on Saturday afternoon, Ballou found her, mop in hand, in the kitchen.

Looking up, the woman said:

"This is Mr. Ballou, I suppose?"

"Yes, madam, my name is Ballou."

"Well, Mr. Ballou, they say you hold that all men will be saved. Do you really believe that doctrine?"

"Yes, madam," said he, "I really believe it."

"Why, sir! Do you really believe that all men are going to be saved just such creatures as they are?"

Seeing that she did not understand the nature of salvation, Ballou asked:

"What is that you have in your hand, dear woman?"

"Why, it is my mop," she replied, laughing.

"Your mop? Well what are you going to do with it?"

"I am going to mop up my floor. I always do it on Saturday afternoon."

"Well sister, I understand you. Are you going to mop it up just as it is?"

"Mop it up just as it is!"

"Yes; you wished to know if I hold that all men will be saved just as they are. Do you intend to mop up the floor just as it is?"

"Why," she replied, "I mop it up to clean it."

"True," said Ballou, "You do not require it to be made clean before you will consent to mop it up. God saves men to

purify them; that's what salvation is designed for. God does not require men to be pure in order that he may save them."<sup>1</sup>

As if to accent the difference in view between himself and the Unitarians, Ballou published in the Trumpet in 1849 an article with the title "Salvation Irrespective of Character."<sup>2</sup>

There is at this time, no objection to the doctrine of the Universal Salvation more pertinaciously insisted on by its opposers, than that the doctrine teaches that all men are to be saved irrespective of moral character, and in violation of the freedom of man's will. The objection supposes that Universalists believe and teach, that God has decreed the happiness of all men, and that he will make them thus happy and forever blessed, be their moral characters what they may; holy or unholy; clean or unclean; righteous or wicked. The amount of the objection is, that the doctrine contends that as God will have all men to be saved, he will save them whether they will or not; whether they repent of their sins or not;--whether they reform or remain sinful.

Such statements that this is the import of Universalism come from those who are ignorant of Universalist doctrine. They, furthermore, are ignorant of the nature of salvation. Salvation is not salvation from hell or the wrath of God, or from punishment. Salvation, as seen in Scripture, is salvation from sin. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Did anyone ask Jesus if he came "to call sinners to repentance irrespective of moral character?" Jesus told his hearers that he was "the bread of God which came down from heaven to give life to the world." Imagine his reaction if someone had asked him if he would "give life to the world

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1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, II, 287-288.

2. Trumpet and Universalist Magazine, XXII (August 18, 1849), 37.

irrespective of moral character." Does Jesus the shepherd save the lost sheep irrespective of moral character?"...The question proves either the ignorance or insincerity of him who asks it." Ballou, as was his custom, cites many Scripture passages to drive home his point that Christ will lead men to salvation and that it is ridiculous to raise the questions of moral character and freedom of the will.

The whole subject is seen in this simple question: Was Saul fit to become a Christian? Is a sinner fit to be saved from sin? Is a sick person fit to be cured? Is a blind man fit to have his eyes opened? Are such as are dead in sin fit to be quickened into a life of holiness?

If the opposer of Universalism would face these questions candidly, less would be heard regarding the licentiousness of the doctrine of the salvation of sinners.

Many of our Unitarian brethren have lately manifested a disposition to show some favor to Universalism, if it be so modified as to teach the certainty of a future state of rewards and punishments. This they contend is indispensable; and that it is licentious not to believe it.

Unitarians should see that if man is to be rewarded in a future state for his righteousness here, the question can be asked where will he be recompensed for the righteousness of his life in a future state. "According to such a theory, recompense will forever be one state of existence in arrear." The same is true in regards to the question of future punishment.

Opposed to the Unitarian position is divine truth- "Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner." To say that sin is not fully punished

in this state of existence is "the most licentious doctrine ever invented; and is, in the very nature of things, the only deception which leads into sin."

To the end of his life, Ballou was stressing this difference between himself and the Unitarians, or--as he may have put it--between the true and false understanding of what salvation is. At the General Convention held in Boston in September of 1851 he put the difference in that homely language in which he expressed himself best:

Your child has fallen into the mire, and its body and its garments are defiled. You cleanse it, and array it in clean robes. The query is, Do you love your child because you have washed it? or, Did you wash it because you loved it?<sup>1</sup>

How much more, the Father in heaven!

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1. Quoted by Abel C. Thomas, Autobiography (Boston: 1852).

## CHAPTER XVIII

### "A FATHER IN ISRAEL"

In his old age Hosea Ballou was like a father to the Universalist denomination. He was universally respected and loved by his brethren as the patriarch of the movement and, indeed, they found it natural to call him "Father Ballou". He was known outside of the movement by a somewhat less respectful title. As he walked the streets of Boston wrapped in thought he was pointed out, by those who knew him only by sight, as "Old Ballou".<sup>1</sup> Some humorous stories are told of strangers who took it upon themselves to question his religion in public. One day he boarded an omnibus to travel from one end of town to the other. As he sat down, he heard the voice of an elderly woman addressing him from the next seat.

"Mr. Ballou, do you not constantly preach to your congregation, 'O ye generation of vipers! how can ye escape the damnation of hell?'"

The old woman was obviously picking a quarrel, but Ballou in his most polite manner replied,

"No, madam; that class do not attend my church!"<sup>2</sup>

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1. Lewis B. Fisher, Which Way? A Study of Universalists and Universalism (Boston: Universalist Publishing House, 1921), p. 39.

2. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 352.

But, on the whole, there was less opposition to Universalism when Ballou was in his seventies than when he was a young man just beginning to preach. Numbers often bring with them respectability, and the Universalists were now numerous. In the town of Boston alone there were four societies and August of 1838 saw the cornerstone laying ceremonies on Warren Street of a meeting house for the Fifth Universalist Society which had been gathering for some time previously at Boylston Hall.<sup>1</sup> In the states and territories across the land the faith was also prospering. There were almost seven hundred societies and 311 preachers, figures which were almost to double in the last dozen years of Ballou's life. By the close of his life there were at least 800,000 adherents to the faith.<sup>2</sup> How things had changed since his young manhood when there was but a handful of preachers and few faithful! It was a healthy and prosperous Israel on which this "Father" smiled in his old age.

It was a happy home on Myrtle Street in the west end of town.<sup>3</sup> With all of the children married by 1839 there were

1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, III, 282.

2. Statistics derived from E. E. Guild, The Universalist's Book of Reference. Containing all the Principal Facts and Arguments, and Scripture Texts, Pro and Con, on the Great Controversy between Limitarians and Universalists (Boston: 1853) 1st. ed., 1844 .

3. The Ballous lived in several houses in their years in Boston. These were on Blossom, Mason, Garden, and Myrtle Streets.

many grandchildren to cast sunshine on the Ballou's last years. Two of Hosea's sons were both preaching the gospel of Universal salvation, Hosea Faxon in Vermont, and Massena Berthier in not very distant Stoughton. Maturin Murray was beginning a distinguished career as a journalist. All six of the girls had married capable young men, two of them-- Mandana and Elmina Ruth-- choosing preachers. Poor Mandana was going through many trials with the death of several of her children.<sup>1</sup> Cassendana and her husband Joseph Wing and their children had come to live with Hosea and Ruth. Cassendana took on the responsibility of managing the household, thus fulfilling Hosea's desire to free his wife of care in their old age.<sup>2</sup> It was a large and happy household which with bowed heads heard the old patriarch in "a most impressive manner" ask the blessing of the throne of grace before the Sunday meal.<sup>3</sup>

The Ballou family had financial security in their years in Boston. Gone were the days when they had to struggle. The salary paid by his church was adequate, and his sermons and other publications sold so well that a profit accrued to both Ballou and the publisher. These, plus wise investment, were responsible for a comfortable existence.<sup>4</sup> But

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1. The Ballou genealogy may be traced in Adin Ballou, The Ballous in America.

2. Safford, Hosea Ballou, p. 224.

3. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, pp. 196-197.

4. Safford, Hosea Ballou, p. 268.

the early habit of frugality was not outgrown. He lived a simple life, believing extravagance to be contrary to the preaching of the gospel.

It always appeared to me inconsistent with the profession of a minister of the gospel, to live expensively; that is, far beyond what is required for the necessities and comforts of life. As a minister is supported by the people of his charge, the propriety of his living beyond the income of his parishoners in general, seems questionable. Moreover, it has best suited my natural taste to avoid extravagances and superfluties.<sup>1</sup>

Ballou was as meticulous in these matters as he was in his thinking. As has been seen, in his financial relationships with his churches he insisted on being paid what was owed him. He would not be underpaid, nor would he accept more than was coming to him. This exactness, said his son Maturin, gave some the impression that he was tight-fisted, but such was not the case.<sup>2</sup> In several instances he sent money to help churches in financial need. In at least one of these cases the pastor was far from friendly to Ballou.<sup>3</sup> But he always insisted on knowing that his gifts to various causes were to be spent wisely.<sup>4</sup>

Hosea saw the erratic career of his old friend Abner Kneeland come to an end in 1838. Although Kneeland had supposedly been convinced of the authenticity of divine

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1. Quoted by M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 216.

2. Ibid., p. 141.

3. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, III, 12.

4. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 142.

revelation after his correspondence with Hosea Ballou<sup>1</sup> in 1814, as has been seen, his Christianity was built on a foundation of sand.<sup>2</sup> Because of newly expressed doubts on the subject of Christianity he had asked to be suspended from membership in the Southern Association in 1829, possibly on the advice of Ballou.<sup>3</sup> In September of that year the long struggle with his soul was resolved, as he announced to the world, via the press, that he had embraced atheism.<sup>4</sup> In a letter to Thomas Whittemore, Hosea called attention to Kneeland's announcement:

...He informs the public that he does not believe in the existence of God, nor in man's conscious existence in a future state. After having stated his unbelief in these two propositions, he has thought it necessary to inform the public that he does not believe in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.<sup>5</sup>

Kneeland gathered a congregation of Freethinkers at the Federal Street Theatre and, at the same time, started a paper by the name of the Investigator.<sup>6</sup> His performances at the theatre must have been something to behold. An eyewitness has left this brief account.

Mr. Kneeland would read portions of the Old Testament, not designed for public reading in a non-Jewish assembly; he would dramatically cast the

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1. Hosea Ballou, Letters in Defence of Divine Revelation

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2. See Chapter XI of this study.
3. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, III, 38.
4. Ibid., p. 61.
5. Ibid., p. 62.
6. Ibid., p. 2724.

Bible across the hall as a book not fit to be kept in decent company.<sup>1</sup>

Kneeland's writings in the Investigator soon got him into trouble with the authorities. At the beginning of 1834 he was indicted by the grand jury of Suffolk County on charges of blasphemy and obscenity.<sup>2</sup> After prolonged legal action, Kneeland was finally convicted for blasphemy in June of 1838 and was sentenced to sixty days imprisonment.<sup>3</sup>

Hosea Ballou pitied his old friend but had little sympathy for his infidelity. Although others raised a cry that Kneeland was being persecuted, Ballou disagreed.

...Whoever will read with candor the arguments in the case in behalf of the government will come to the conclusion that the learned attorney, so far from manifesting the spirit of persecution for honest sentiments, has ably vindicated the rights of conscience, the rational liberty of the press, and has in no instance overleaped the bounds of his duty.<sup>4</sup>

Although he did not agree with Kneeland's opinions, their friendship continued. Hosea often walked to the jail to visit Kneeland, to counsel him, and attempt to comfort him in his misfortune.<sup>5</sup>

1. Quoted by Safford, Hosea Ballou, p. 115.

2. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, III, 179. The present writer is informed by Reverend Harry M. Sherman that the statute under which Kneeland was indicted is still on the law books of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

3. Emerson Hugh Lalone, And Thy Neighbor as Thyself, A Story of Universalist Social Action (Boston: Universalist Publishing House, 1939, p. 24.

4. Quoted by Whittemore, Life of Ballou, III, 180.

5. Ibid., p. 275.

After Kneeland's release from jail he stayed in Boston for a while, preaching still to his congregation of free-thinkers, but in smaller quarters since his misfortune had diminished their numbers. Soon he decided to give this up and to move to Iowa to start his life anew. His parting advice to his congregation was to stay together as long as possible and then to join the Unitarians!

The Unitarians are nothing more than a fashionable kind of deists, believing, perhaps, more in "the God of the statute", than in any other God distinct from nature; but they have little to say in their preaching about heaven or hell, God or devil, in a way by which anybody can tell what they mean, while, as I am told, they deliver many good moral lectures.<sup>1</sup>

Soon after his arrival in Iowa, Kneeland died of "bilious fever".<sup>2</sup>

No matter how popular and vigorous a preacher Ballou had been and still was, no matter how honored and revered, the time came when a group in the School Street Church began to question whether it was not advisable to bring to the church an associate pastor who would appeal to the younger generation. Agitation for this change began in 1841-- Ballou was now seventy-- and continued for a period of about four years.<sup>3</sup> It appears that no agreement could be reached as to who would be able to take the place of "Father Ballou" in the

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1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, III, p. 275n.

2. Safford, Hosea Ballou, p. 116.

3. Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Second Society, p. 24.

pulpit. From May of 1842 to the following January, T. C. Adam candidated.<sup>1</sup> But obviously he was not capable of taking the place of the old lion. The society next tried the talents of young, sensitive, H. B. Soule. He candidated for a full year from May of 1844.<sup>2</sup> It appears from his letters of this period that he had not acquired full self-confidence. He was surprised,--it was miraculous,--he wrote to a friend, that he was asked to be "a sort of colleague" with Ballou.<sup>3</sup> He was genuinely devoted to his senior, as is seen from this letter dated in 1844:

You will want to hear a word of our Father in Israel. He continues in good health for a man of seventy-three years old; he preaches yet as strong as most men at forty. Nothing but death will ever bring rest to his labors;--most men at his age would sit down, and in dreamy idleness or mere social converse, wait their call. Not so with him-- his God-given mission will not be finished till his lips are sealed forever,--he will preach as long as he can stand....<sup>4</sup>

But Soule, too, was not considered capable of filling the shoes of Hosea Ballou. In the fall of 1845 the agitation on the subject came to a head. One or two gentlemen who owned quite a few pews went so far as to call on the proprietors to sell the meeting house and dissolve the society. Some

1. Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Second Society, p. 25.

2. Ibid.

3. Letter from H. B. Soule to a Friend, 1844. Quoted by Caroline A. Soule, Memoir of Rev. H. B. Soule (New York: 1852), p. 84.

4. Ibid.

claimed that their primary motivation was the monetary profit they expected from such a transaction. Whatever their motive their proposal was rejected by a vote of two to one with one hundred votes cast.<sup>1</sup>

The difficulties over calling an associate resulted in a schism in the church. A group of dissatisfied withdrew, taking their children out of the Sunday School, and began holding services on Chardon Street.<sup>2</sup> This incident was probably responsible for the serious, but generous action which Ballou now took. Knowing that the society could not afford to pay his salary and still be able to afford a top-notch preacher, he offered to give up all financial compensation and retain only the title of Senior Pastor. The society voted to accept his offer on September 28, 1845,<sup>3</sup> and at the same meeting extended a call to the rising star among the younger generation of Universalist preachers, Edwin H. Chapin of the Charlestown church.<sup>4</sup> His salary was set at \$2,000.<sup>5</sup>

Hosea Ballou preached the sermon for the Installation

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1. Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Second Society, pp. 24-25.

2. George H. Emerson, Life of Alonzo Ames Miner, S.T.D., LL.D. (Boston: Universalist Publishing House, 1896), p. 176.

3. Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Second Society, p. 25.

4. Sumner Ellis, Life of Edwin H. Chapin, D.D. (Boston, Universalist Publishing House, 1882), 108.

Service of Chapin on January 28, 1846.<sup>1</sup> The conservative School Street Church, used to sermons on theological subjects, was not prepared for the sermonizing of a "new-born reformer". Chapin pounded home the evils of slavery, intemperance, and war.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, it was a different brand of Universalism that he preached. He did not agree with Ballou's position of future punishment and was outspoken on this point.<sup>3</sup> And Chapin was not a Bible preacher.<sup>4</sup> He was one of the younger generation which Ballou was in these years constantly criticizing for straying from the Bible and preaching sermons on non-doctrinal subjects.

It is much to the old man's credit that despite the fact that Chapin's preaching was now overshadowing his own great accomplishments, and despite the fact that his ideas were at great variance with his colleague's at many points, Hosea liked him nonetheless. There was just one point at which he was willing to criticize the meteoric young pulpiteer: on the subject of money. The frugality of "Father Ballou" was shocked at the extravagance of Chapin and he was frank in saying so.<sup>5</sup>

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1. "Order of Exercises, at the Installation of the Rev. E. H. Chapin, as Associate Pastor of the Second Universalist Society, Boston," inserted in the Choir Record Book, January 29, 1843-December 26, 1847, of the Second Universalist Society.

2. Ellis, Life of Chapin, p. 110.

3. Safford, Hosea Ballou, p. 230.

4. Ibid., p. 231.

5. Ibid., p. 230.

It was the problem of money which finally caused the resignation of Chapin from the School Street Church in February of 1848.<sup>1</sup> Because of his extravagance he had succeeded in piling up a sizeable number of debts. The Fourth Universalist Society on Murray Street in New York City managed to attract Chapin to their pulpit by an "offer to assume certain debts which he had incurred with characteristic prodigal generosity and open-handedness..."<sup>2</sup> The letter which wooed Chapin from School Street is still extant and makes very interesting reading. The Committee of the New York church, in a letter dated in Boston, state that they have been authorized by the church to offer him \$3,000 per year (\$1,000 more than his salary at School Street). They also mention "a small amount of ready money" (\$1,100) that he might have need of if he were to decide to move, and point out that he can have this money as soon as he makes his decision!<sup>3</sup>

Chapin was succeeded by the young pastor of the church at Lowell, Alonzo Ames Miner, who assumed his new duties May 1, 1848.<sup>4</sup> He was installed at the end of May with both

1. Chapin Letter of Resignation as Pastor of the Second Universalist Society of Boston, February 5, 1848.

2. H. S. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, 2d, p. 237.

3. Letter from Committee of the Fourth Universalist Society of New York, to E. H. Chapin. Boston, January 12, 1848.

4. Letter from A. A. Miner to Newton Talbot, Clerk of the Second Universalist Society of Boston, Lowell, April 12, 1848.

Ballou and Chapin taking part in the service.<sup>1</sup> This young man was more to Ballou's liking. Miner was an "exact logician" and, also, thoroughly versed in the Scripture.<sup>2</sup> But Miner had a touch of the reformer in him. He accepted the call to School Street only after it was fully understood that he would be free to fight the cause of temperance in rum-making Boston.<sup>3</sup>

Ballou and the young man had a father-son type of relationship. When Ballou was not off preaching on the Sabbath he would sit in the pulpit with Miner. He often encouraged him with such comments as "Brother Miner, the devil will never thank you for that sermon."<sup>4</sup> Miner, like Chapin before him, hammered away at the evil of slavery. Despite the difference of approach, Ballou approved of his efforts, often vocally. As Miner pursued the anti-slavery cause with more and more heat, Ballou remarked, "You know, Brother Miner, that Demosthenes kept up warning the Athenians to beware of Philip, and when asked why he did so since the Athenians continued listless, said: 'I mean that Athenian ears shall get familiar with warnings against Philip.'"<sup>5</sup>

1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, IV, 89.

2. Safford, Hosea Ballou, p. 232.

3. Emerson, Life of Miner, p. 181.

4. Ibid., p. 187.

5. Ibid., pp. 187-188.

Although the great pulpit oratory of E. H. Chapin had brought some of the dissenters back to the School Street Church, it was the capable Miner who accomplished the delicate task of healing the wounds.<sup>1</sup>

It is to be expected that an old man will attempt to hold on to the past and the old ways of doing things. The last dozen years or so of Ballou's life he often objected to what he considered bad trends in his beloved denomination. He had finally given in on the subject of Sunday Schools, after having opposed them in earlier years because he felt that young minds were warped by teaching given in such institutions. The School Street Church started its Sunday School in 1835<sup>2</sup> and the records show that occasionally the venerable pastor was "present and addressed the School."<sup>3</sup> In order to further "right views of Christianity"<sup>4</sup> he wrote for the children in the Sabbath Schools a catechism which was published in 1841.

To the new trend in Universalist preaching he was never reconciled. He had the good sense to realize that maybe his complaints were those of a man grown old, but he did not approve of the new-fangled style of Universalist preaching.

1. Emerson, Life of Miner, p. 177.

2. Sunday School Minute Book, May 31, 1835-July 14, 1839, Second Universalist Society in Boston.

3. Ibid.

4. Hosea Ballou, The Christian Catechism, Designed for Use of Sabbath Schools (Boston: 1841), xiv.

The younger men were replacing sermons on straight Biblical truth with eloquent, even poetical, sermons on moral themes. "For one, I am willing to confess that I have no relish for golden goblets which contain no wine, nor costly dishes which contain no food."<sup>1</sup> He said in 1839 he was so old that he had not time to bring his preaching up to the polished standards of the theological schools, so he would just attempt to live up to the standard set by Jesus!<sup>2</sup>

He published several articles and letters on this subject up until shortly before his death. In October, 1850, he attended a prayer meeting and heard the orthodox minister frighten the young people with verbal pictures of terrible scenes of God's wrath in hell. This just went to prove his stand that Universalists needed to preach doctrine more forcefully than ever. He wrote a letter to the editor of the Trumpet, that is, Whittemore, to express his concern.<sup>3</sup> The time has not gone by, as many of his colleagues think, for doctrinal preaching. It is needed as badly in the community now as ever. It is just as important now as it was in earlier days to expose error in the doctrine "of the Roman, the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, the Congregationalist, the Baptist, the Methodist and other sects...." They still believe the

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1. Quoted by Whittemore, Life of Ballou, III, 305.

2. Ibid.

3. Trumpet, XXIII (October 26, 1850), 78.

same errors. Just because there are more Universalists than there were forty years ago does not mean that the whole world has been converted.

...I feel it a duty to add, that within six months I have travelled in five of our States and preached in as many as fifteen towns to Universalist Societies; and it has been a very general complaint, made known to me, that the Societies were favored with but a very little doctrinal preaching, and heard scarcely any sermons designed to make people understand the Scriptures, or the great truths they teach. But sermons suitable for moral and scientific lectures were nearly all the food the pastors gave their flocks.<sup>1</sup>

All his life Hosea Ballou opposed theological schools and he kept this animosity to the very end. He was not opposed to education; indeed, he had served as a trustee of the Nichols Academy founded by Universalists.<sup>2</sup> He believed in literary attainments, but not in theological schools. He said that they were "employed in teaching youth how to evade the plain testimony of Jesus, and how to keep the people from receiving it."<sup>3</sup> This prejudice, of course, went back to his earliest days. His father, in the way of the early Baptists, had had no theological education, and Hosea himself was a self-trained preacher.

In 1840 there began a concerted drive on the part of several men in the denomination to found a theological school for the better training of their ministers. The Massachusetts

1. Trumpet, XXIII (October 26, 1850), 78.
2. Eddy, History of Universalism, II, 413.
3. H. Ballou, Lecture Sermons, p. 201. See also, Nine Sermons, p. 130.

Convention in that year voted to establish a seminary for "the preparation of young men for the gospel ministry."<sup>1</sup> In the light of Ballou's known opposition to theological schools it is difficult to understand why he was appointed to the committee. It is possible, of course, that the patriarch could not be ignored; furthermore, it may have been thought a way to convert him to the proposal. After several meetings the committee accepted the offer of Charles Tufts of ten acres of land on Walnut Hill in Medford and chose to name the proposed school "Walnut Hill Evangelical Seminary."<sup>2</sup> The trustees chosen to raise the money and establish the school included Hosea Ballou.<sup>3</sup> But he does not appear to have been converted. He carried on a lengthy debate in the columns of the Trumpet with a proponent of the plan.<sup>4</sup> He pointed out that the cause of Universalism had thrived under such unlettered men as Rich, the Elder Streeters, Barnes, Laithe, Young, and others in the beginning, as well as among men of higher education later. "The question here comes up, what evidence have we that the course which has thus succeeded, and the means which divine wisdom has used hitherto and blessed, are not suitable to be continued?"<sup>5</sup> Theological schools will

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1. Walnut Hill Evangelical Seminary Trustees Record Book (In possession of the Universalist Historical Society Library, Crane Theological School, Tufts University.), p. 1.

2. Ibid., p. 3.

3. Ibid., p. 4.

4. Trumpet, XIV, 29, 57, 61, 84.

5. Ibid., p. 29.

inculcate prejudice and train unfit men who under the present system never seek to preach. He challenges the committee to show that theological schools have extended "unadulterated Christianity." The present system of having young men read divinity under a settled minister is better than a school where all the graduates will be stamped with the mentality of its head.<sup>1</sup>

Despite Ballou's opposition the friends of the Walnut Hill Seminary proceeded with their plans.<sup>2</sup> That they did not have success was not due to Ballou but to the lack of foresight on the part of Universalists generally.

In the late forties transcendentalism and the new rationalistic views of the Bible accounts began to infiltrate the Universalist denomination. This "German philosophy", as it was called at the time, was being zealously propagated among the Unitarians by such men as the fiery transcendentalist Theodore Parker. It was bound to be felt in Universalist circles. The older men of the denomination resisted the new influence, believing that there could be no confidence in Christianity if the Bible accounts of miracles were to be questioned. But a small group of preachers, under the influence of the new rationalism, began to express their

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., p. 72.

doubts publicly. The first overt act occurred in 1846 when a young preacher aired this latest form of infidelity at an installation.<sup>1</sup> Hosea Ballou, 2d, was present for the occasion and was obviously very upset by the new views, for at the conclusion of the sermon he rose to his feet and publicly dissociated himself from the young man's statements. Universalists, he said, should not be held accountable for them.<sup>2</sup>

The new views were opposed by Alonzo Miner when the Massachusetts Convention met at Hingham that year. He explained his faith in the miracles in a sermon entitled the "Seal of Christ's Messiahship." The crisis came to a head at the Boston Association meeting at Lynn in November of the following year. One of the brethren raised three questions:

1. What constitutes a Christian minister in full fellowship with the Boston Association?
2. How far does this tie bind one brother to exchange pulpit services with another?
3. What should be believed by one who calls himself a Christian?

After some discussion of these questions, a committee, including the two Hosea Ballous, was appointed to study the matter. From the committee, under Hosea Ballou's chairmanship, came this resolution, in the chairman's handwriting:

1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, IV, 78.
2. Ibid., pp. 78-79
3. Ibid., p. 79.

Resolved, That this Association express its solemn conviction, that in order for one to be regarded as a Christian minister with respect to faith, he must believe in the Bible account of the life, teachings, miracles, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>

The debate which followed was so heated and prolonged that it was found necessary to recess the meeting and set an extraordinary session of the Association for a later date. This session was held on December 1, 1847, at Cambridgeport.<sup>2</sup> A lengthy debate heard many charges that the proposed resolution amounted to imposing a creed on the members of the Boston Association.<sup>3</sup> Finally the venerable Hosea Ballou rose from his seat amid much applause and gave his views on the matter. He was in favor of the resolution, he said. But it was not a creed as the opponents of the measure had claimed. It is simply a statement of what a Christian minister is.

...The report supposes that no man can justly be regarded as a Christian minister, who does not believe the Bible account of the life, teachings, miracles, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. I give my vote for the report because I am satisfied that the condition of our ministry, and, that of our Societies, and, in a word of the Christian cause, demands such an expression.<sup>4</sup>

Hosea was obviously afraid that the new rationalistic spirit

1. Ibid., pp. 79-80.

2. Ibid., p. 80.

3. Trumpet, XX (December 11, 1847), 102.

4. Ibid.

was hurting the Universalist churches. He was not only defending the church, however, but the book he loved so well. He had overcome his doubts many, many years before and had complete confidence that the Bible contained the true account of the life and ministry of Jesus.

The resolution as proposed by Hosea Ballou's committee was overwhelmingly accepted by the Boston Association,<sup>1</sup> and the Association's action was commended by the Massachusetts Convention the following June.<sup>2</sup> The rationalists thereafter lost their influence in the denomination; some left the church, others appeared to come around to the more conservative position. Thomas Whittemore wrote a few years later, "Quiet was restored, and the Bible lives in the hearts of our people."<sup>3</sup>

It was in the summer of 1847 that the people of the School Street Church, desiring to capture the face and form of their beloved pastor before he be taken from them, commissioned the artist H. C. Pratt to paint a portrait of Ballou to be hung in Murray Hall, the vestry of the meeting house. The result was a life-size portrait to the waist, picturing Ballou in the pulpit, his right hand fingering the pages of the Bible, his left extended. This is the most

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1. Ibid., pp. 102-103.

2. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, IV, 110.

3. Ibid., p. 82n.

attractive and best known of the several portraits in existence. One suspects, however, that Ballou was somewhat idealized by the artist; at seventy-six Hosea looks much too young in this portrait. It now hangs in the study of the minister of the Arlington Street Church in Boston with which the Second Society of Universalists is federated.<sup>1</sup>

Although Ballou contributed many reviews, articles, and letters to various Universalist publications, he had not undertaken any extended publication since his work on future retribution in 1834. He probably would not have undertaken another book, but the publisher J. M. Usher persuaded him to write "A General Epistle to Universalists," a sort of farewell address. Having gotten this from Ballou, he then talked him into writing several other pieces.<sup>2</sup> These essays, along with bits of earlier writings and many poems, were compiled into a book with the appropriate name, A Voice to Universalists,<sup>3</sup> and given to the public in September of 1849. These articles mostly reflect those subjects which kept him pre-occupied in his late years. He complains that the young Universalist ministers are more concerned with "what is called science" than with Biblical preaching.<sup>4</sup>

1. H. C. Pratt was paid \$100 for executing this portrait. See Treasurer's Account Book, 1844-1869, Second Universalist Society of Boston, p. 78.

2. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, IV, 127.

3. Hosea Ballou, A Voice to Universalists (Boston:1849).

4. Ibid., pp. 14-15.

Under pretence of progress, it seems that some have come to the conclusion, that they must leave the Scriptures, Christ and his apostles, all which only served for their times, and go on to perfection, adopting as a motto, Upward and Onward!<sup>1</sup>

His advice to young men who plan to enter the ministry very definitely reflects the struggle in the Boston Association over the influx of German rationalism.<sup>2</sup> He praises the "Sabbath schools," their superintendents and teachers and compares these new advantages to the state of things fifty years earlier. Parents should take advantage of this progress so "that all Zion's children shall be taught of the Lord...."<sup>3</sup>

The poetry which composes the bulk of the book is a rare collection of mediocrity. In the brief preface to this section Ballou admits that he "makes no pretensions of being a poet, having never studied the art for a single hour; and it was with great reluctance that he consented that this volume should be presented to the public."<sup>4</sup> The subject of Ballou's verse was to be a sore point with thinking Universalists for years to come.

The grossest unkindness ever done to him, or to us in him, and that which many of us have never yet been able to forgive, was done when one of our publishers gathered up these rhymes and published them as part of his "Voice

1. Ibid., p. 16.
2. Ibid., pp. 41ff.
3. Ibid., p. 22.
4. Ibid., p. 127.

to Universalists." He never had such terrible occasion to say, "Save me from my friends."<sup>1</sup>

Hosea Ballou conducted the morning service at the School Street Church on November 10, 1850. At the close of the service he announced that he would preach again that afternoon--a valedictory sermon. Feeling that life might end soon without warning, he desired to preach as if it were the last sermon he would ever deliver to his beloved congregation.<sup>2</sup> It can be imagined that the congregation that afternoon was even more attentive than usual to the words of "Father Ballou."

In his Valedictory Discourse<sup>3</sup> Ballou reviews and once again refutes the long catalogue of errors in the Christian church to the fighting of which he had devoted his life. The most interesting part of the valedictory is that which deals with the state of Universalism at that time. There were Universalists, who saw a swing away from Ballou's theory of no future judgment to restorationism. Writing a biographical sketch of Ballou in 1846, Otis Skinner had noticed that there was now "a very large proportion of our ministers" who did

1. E. G. Brooks, "Rev. Hosea Ballou," Universalist Quarterly, (New Series) VII (October, 1870), 409.

2. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, IV, 194.

3. Hosea Ballou, Valedictory Discourse. Number one of series, "The Universalist Pulpit" (Boston: 1851).

not agree with Ballou on the subject of future punishment.<sup>1</sup> And Ballou's namesake, Hosea, 2d, wrote in 1848 that he thought he could discern the beginning of a new period in Universalist history. He felt that current opinion was "strongly in favor of a moral connection of the present life with the future...."<sup>2</sup> In the light of this trend Ballou's disgruntlement expressed in the valedictory can be understood. He sees the trend toward restorationism as due to those Universalists who are attempting to ingratiate themselves with the Unitarians by adopting opinions peculiar to that denomination, that is,

the opinion that men carry into the next world the imperfections of this; so that their moral condition, hereafter, will depend on the characters they form while here in the flesh; but that they may and will improve, and progress in virtue and holiness, in the spirit world.<sup>3</sup>

He once again marshals his favorite texts to show that such reasoning is contrary to the words of that great Universalist, St. Paul:

It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power:

1. O. A. Skinner, "Biographical Sketch of Rev. Hosea Ballou," The Universalist Miscellany: A Monthly Magazine, III (May, 1846), 433.

2. Hosea Ballou, 2d, "Dogmatic and Religious History of Universalism in America," Universalist Quarterly, V (January, 1848), 80.

3. H. Ballou, Valedictory Discourse, p. 51.

it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.

As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Those who indulge in speculation respecting the future state rather than trust the Scriptures are, in effect, saying that divine revelation is "not only incomplete, but also inaccurate...."<sup>1</sup>

It is fitting that Ballou should end his valedictory on this characteristic note. This was the last sermon that he put on paper.<sup>2</sup> But he was to live to say much more.

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1. Ibid., p. 53.

2. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, IV, 219.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE LAST DAYS

It is perhaps symbolic that in the last year of Hosea Ballou's life the old School Street Church underwent a complete remodeling. It was modernized, the building raised, and moved back from the Street, to provide more adequate space in the basement and a better, more attractive frontage. The work began in April 1851.<sup>1</sup> Although Hosea approved of the change, it must have pained him to see the old, plain building altered. Here he had declared war on the inhuman orthodoxy of Boston almost thirty-five years before; and all of these years he had steadfastly proclaimed the love of God for His children and their immediate salvation and transformation at the dissolution of the body. But times had changed and just as the old-fashioned sermon was no longer considered beautiful by the new generation, neither was the old School Street Church. The work of remodeling continued through the summer and fall and the building was ready for occupancy by early December. The venerable senior pastor offered the prayer at the service of rededication.<sup>2</sup>

Hosea Ballou returned to his birthplace at Richmond,

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1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, I, 227.

2. Ibid., pp. 261-262.

New Hampshire, often in his later years.<sup>1</sup> One of the most delightful of these visits occurred in October of 1851, just eight months before his death. He spent eleven days<sup>2</sup> with his friends, new and old. He was met at the depot at Fitzwilliam by a good friend; from there they drove down the narrow road which winds through the wooded hills and in Richmond passes through the farm on which he was born.<sup>3</sup>

During his stay he spent much time with Joshua Britton, Jr., the Universalist minister of Winchester and Richmond, visiting acquaintances. On Sunday he entered the pulpit and preached to a congregation which had come from all of the surrounding towns--Swansey, Fitzwilliam, Troy, Warwick, Royston, Orange, Winchester--to hear the celebrated preacher. He visited the old hillside burial ground which held the dust of his beloved parents. And, of course, he exulted in the clear, beautiful vista of Ballou's Dell. The old homestead was gone; a new house was near the spot where the log cabin stood--the cabin in which he was born. As he and Britton stood in the Dell looking up at the hills which were still the same, his companion suggested that he recite the poem that he had written telling of his love for this scene. Hosea acquiesced, and with clear, resonant voice, with eyes upturned and arm

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1. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, p. 293.

2. Trumpet, XXV, 41.

3. Hosea Ballou quoted by Whittemore, Life of Ballou, IV, 257.

raised to the hills, gave forth

"My Native Richmond":

There are no hills in Hampshire New,  
Nor valleys half so fair,  
As those outspread before our view,  
In merry Richmond, where

I first my mortal race began,  
And spent my youthful days;  
Where first I saw the golden sun,  
And felt his 'livening rays.

There is no spot in Richmond, where  
Fond memory loves to dwell,  
As on the glebe outspreading there  
In Ballou's blithesome dell.

There are no birds which sing so well  
As those upon the spray,  
Where, from the brow of grassy hill,  
Comes forth the morning ray.

Unnumbered flowers, the pride of spring,  
Are born to flourish there,  
And round their mellow odors fling,  
On all the ambient air.

There purling streams have charms for me,  
Which vulgar brooks ne'er give;  
And winds breathe sweeter down the lea  
Than where magnolias live.<sup>1</sup>

When his friends asked Hosea if he planned to visit soon again, he said maybe--he did not know. At the end of almost two weeks of preaching and visiting, Hosea headed home via Lancaster where he had left Ruth visiting daughter Mandana.<sup>2</sup>

1. H. Ballou, Voice to Universalists, pp. 250-251.

2. The story of this last visit to Richmond recounted by Rev. Joshua Britton, Jr., is found in the Trumpet, XXV, 41.

Although he was eighty, Hosea was remarkable for the amount of preaching he did. Since he seldom preached at School Street, he was off to the inland towns practically every weekend.<sup>1</sup> Of course, itinerating was a little easier than it had been in his early years. There were now railroads to many points, but such travelling still left much to be desired as to comfort. The arrival of the year 1852 found Ballou in New York preaching. He was happy at the growth of Universalism in that area. There five congregations in New York City, one in Brooklyn and one in Williamsburgh.<sup>2</sup>

April thirty arrived with Ballou in good health. An eighty-first birthday is an important occasion. Hosea felt that it warranted a poem; he called it "My Labors Last Year." It is easy to imagine Hosea penning the lines and then reading them to his Ruth for her approval. They would cheer her up. She had not been well lately, spending much of her time in bed.

How swiftly on the wheel of time  
 Twelve months have past away!  
 And, by a Providence divine,  
 Brought this my natal day!

And O, how kind to me has been  
 My heavenly Father's care,  
 Thus to sustain, and me to bring  
 To this, to me, new year!

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1. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, IV, 402.  
 2. Ibid., p. 264n.

In many vineyards of our Lord  
 My labors have been spent,  
 To plant the doctrine of his word,  
 By skill which He has lent.

And large has been the sweet reward  
 My soul has garner'd up,  
 While drinking deeply of the word,  
 From an o'erflowing cup.

Who would not live a thousand years  
 To feed the lambs of Him,  
 Who died to banish all our fears,  
 And save the world from sin?

But God will many laborers send,  
 When I am called away;  
 His cause and doctrine to defend:  
 For their success I pray.<sup>1</sup>

Father Ballou was made much of at the Reform Festival that May. The General Reform Association had grown out of the need to apply the ethics of Universalism to the social problems of the day.<sup>2</sup> The Association brought together the various reform groups during anniversary week. Ballou was a little too old and conservative to take the stump for such causes as anti-slavery, temperance, etc., but he was appreciated nonetheless as a reformer in his own right. As he told the Association meeting in 1850:

Why, this work of reform has gone on so effectually that even the old partial god himself, in whom the theologians used to believe, has got reformed. He is so changed that the old clergy, if they were to hear him described now, would not know him.<sup>3</sup>

Now in 1852 he was called upon to give his yearly mes-

1. Trumpet, XXIV, 190.

2. Lalone, Thy Neighbor as Thyself, p. 40

3. Quoted by Whittemore, Life of Ballou, IV, 183.

sage and blessing to the brethren. He said he was not sure that he understood why such compliments were paid to old men. He knew he was old and intended to avail himself of the privilege of age. What was that privilege? To be a child. "Once a man and twice a child." He remembered when he was a child how he was fond of praise and loved to be petted and called a good boy. The enthusiastic gathering cheered at this last statement. Then Hosea drew the parallel. Now as an old man he found himself to be a child again: he was the same boy; he loved to be praised now.<sup>1</sup>

This was the last time that Hosea would be able to hear the praise of his Universalist brothers. On Sunday, May 30, he spent the day in Woonsocket, Rhode Island,<sup>2</sup> preaching at two services, morning and afternoon. The afternoon sermon was preached from the Titus 2:11-12, a most fitting text for the last sermon of this greatest of preachers of modern Universalism.

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation  
hath appeared to all men,

Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly  
lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly,  
in this present world.

The next day Ballou returned to Boston. Tuesday night his sleep was disturbed, he coughed frequently; but he rose early Wednesday morning, June 2, for this was an important

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1. Ibid., p. 280.

2. Trumpet, XXV, 6, 22

day. He was to travel to Plymouth for the sessions of the Massachusetts Convention. When it was time to go he entered Ruth's room! She had been in bed for several weeks.<sup>1</sup> He gave her a tender kiss and then made ready to depart. As he was passing through the parlor, he suddenly felt faint and fell to the sofa. His daughter Cassandana Wing came to his aid. He was suffering from chills which continued all day. He lay all night in a delirious state. The next day, however, he was much better, his mind was as bright as usual. But as the day wore on, fever set in with diarrhoea. In this condition he remained Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. He was failing fast. On Monday morning his old friend and disciple Thomas Whittemore came to see him; he seemed to recognize him. He tried to speak, but in vain.<sup>2</sup> Hosea, 2d, and Miner also came, anxious to see him before the end,<sup>3</sup> His old friend Dr. A. R. Thompson of Charlestown was at his side when Hosea spoke his last words. The doctor addressed him, and the old man replied, "I do not think I understand what the doctor said."<sup>4</sup> But the end had come. With the whole family, including Hosea, 2d, at his side, Hosea Ballou met his death and glory at 10:15 A.M., June 7, 1852.

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1. M. M. Ballou, Hosea Ballou, pp. 336-367.

2. Trumpet, XXV, 2.

3. Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Second Society, p. 30.

4. Whittemore, Life of Ballou, IV, 298.

The School Street Church, decked in black crepe, was filled long before the time set for the funeral to begin.<sup>1</sup> At the Ballou home prayers were said in the hearing of Ruth Ballou who was still not able to leave her bed. Then the body was taken across Beacon Hill to School Street. It was brought into the church by the pall bearers, close friends all: his Universalist colleagues Sylvanus Cobb, Lucius R. Paige, Sebastian Streeter, Josiah Gilman, Thomas Whittemore; his Baptist friend, Reverend Doctor Daniel Sharp; Reverend Doctor S. Barrett of the Unitarian Society of Chambers Street; and--Edward Turner now reconciled.<sup>2</sup>

The funeral tribute was by Hosea Ballou's associate, Alonzo Ames Miner: "Our Father has fallen! Loved, venerated, full of years, as he was, he has passed from the places of his love to the home of his hope."<sup>3</sup>

The funeral procession passed up School Street, down Tremont to Boylston Street to the grave yard at the foot of Boston Common. The procession, which included nearly one hundred Universalist clergymen, extended from the head of School Street to the corner of Boylston Street--a distance of half a mile. The body was laid in a temporary resting place,

1. 3 P.M., June 9, 1852.

2. Trumpet, XXV, 6.

3. A. A. Miner, A Discourse, delivered in School-Street Church, Boston, June 9, 1852, at the Funeral of the Rev. Hosea Ballou, Senior Pastor (Boston: 1852), p. 5.

until arrangements could be made for an appropriate tomb.<sup>1</sup>

In the days that followed there were many tributes to Hosea Ballou, both written and spoken. Probably none was as truthful as that of the great soul Theodore Parker. He told his Twenty-eight Congregational Society at the Melodeon:

There died in this city recently, a man, who a little more than half a century ago, arose in our midst, a man not remarkable for extensive culture or acquirements, but certainly remarkable for great energy, who received the sentiment that God is the Father and Friend of the whole race of man, that it was the will of our Heavenly Father that "not one of his little ones should perish." I refer to Rev. Hosea Ballou. He went through the land proclaiming this great truth, and he has wrought a revolution in the thoughts and minds of men more mighty than any which has been accomplished during the same time by all the politicians in the nation. At the commencement of his labors there probably were not five thousand persons who would give heed to his teachings; now there are probably five millions! an illustration of the great results which may be attained without the use of extraordinary means, by the persevering energy of a single mind.<sup>1</sup>

Hosea Ballou provided well for his wife in his will.<sup>2</sup>

Ruth was to receive \$300 a year annuity from a fund set up for that purpose. The rest of Hosea's estate was to be divided equally among all nine of his children. But Ruth was not to use this generous provision. Nine months after Hosea passed on

1. Theodore Parker, "Duties of the Church," delivered at the Melodeen, July 25, 1852. Quoted by the Trumpet, XXV (July 31, 1852), 30.

2. Last Will and Testament of Hosea Ballou (In possession of the Universalist Historical Society Library, Crane Theological School, Tufts University).

she followed.<sup>1</sup>

The remains of Hosea and Ruth Ballou were laid side by side at the beautiful Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge. The monument, with the figure of Hosea in preaching posture, is the tribute of grateful Universalists to their "Father Ballou."<sup>2</sup>

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1. March 1, 1853. A. A. Miner, Choosing Death Rather than Life. A Discourse, delivered in the Universalist Church, School-Street, March 6, being the Sunday after the Funeral of Mrs. Ruth Ballou, relict of the late Rev. Hosea Ballou (Boston: 1853).

2. The monument was erected with money collected among Universalists throughout the land. See Trumpet, XXV, 6.

## CHAPTER XX

### CONCLUSIONS

Several years after the death of Hosea Ballou, the Universalist minister Dr. Theodore Clapp of New Orleans was present at a gathering of Unitarian ministers in Boston. The conversation eventually became concerned with the great changes which had taken place in American theology and the contributions of several of the theological greats. The reverend gentlemen gave their opinions as to who among the New England theologians had made the greatest contribution. Most of them offered the name of William Ellery Channing; names of more orthodox variety were also mentioned--Edwards, Emmons, Hopkins. At this point, Dr. Clapp, who had not entered the discussion, spoke up.

"Gentlemen, you have not yet named the man!"

"What!" was the expression of amazement from the company, "not named him!"

"No, gentlemen," said Clapp, "you have not yet named him."

"Why, who can it be? We have named every preacher of eminence in New England."

"And yet, gentlemen, you have not named the man."

"Well, who do you say he is?"

With all the impressiveness he could command, Dr. Clapp gave the mysterious name.

"Hosea Ballou has effected more and greater changes in the theological opinions of the people of New England, than any man dead or living."

There was a long, cold silence. Then the conversation started up again-- along different lines.<sup>1</sup>

The contribution of Hosea Ballou to liberal religion has been overshadowed by the names of other divines of literary accomplishments. The rough, in places crude, language in which Ballou expressed much of his thought has not found its way into the libraries of the cultured. His language was that of the lower social classes of New England. It could not be expected to compete with the polished, rich expression of a man such as the great Channing. The contrast is brought vividly to the eye when Ballou takes occasion to quote Channing in his own works.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to this failure of Ballou to compete with the literary theologians of New England, it should be noted that certain areas of his thought were rejected by the liberals who, thus, tended to ignore his work. During the

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1. John G. Adams, Fifty Notable Years, pp. 91-92.

2. A good example of this contrast is found in Hosea Ballou, Examination of the Doctrine of Future Retribution, pp. 31-32, where he quotes Channing's sermon The Evil of Sin.

latter years of his life it was already obvious that restorationism was gaining ascendance over Ballou's no future punishment theory. By 1871 Adin Ballou could write with satisfaction that nine-tenths of the Universalist denomination had rejected "Ultra-Universalism" and had embraced the theory of a limited future punishment.<sup>1</sup> In 1878 the Universalist Ministers of Boston and the surrounding area accepted a platform which specifically denounced the "death and glory" theory which they said was "repudiated by all."<sup>2</sup> Writing in 1917, John Coleman Adams could state:

"...Today the entire Universalist church is frankly of the conviction that not only do we 'get our punishment as we go along'--to revive a theological colloquialism of the former days--but that it may go a long way with us into the future."<sup>3</sup>

The second element in Ballou's thought which was unpalatable to the liberals of succeeding generations was his determined determinism. He insisted that if God be infinite, all-gracious, all-loving, all-wise, that He must necessarily have complete control of his creation and that it was shoddy thinking to believe otherwise. Universalists tended to shy away from this theory of "necessity" and to adopt the

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1. A. Ballou writing in The Universalist, February 4, 1871. Quoted by Eddy, History of Universalism, II, 338.

2. Quoted by Ibid., p. 342.

3. John Coleman Adams, "The Universalists," The Religious History of New England (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917), p. 315.

Arminianism of the Unitarians which gave all men the choice to accept or reject God's proffered grace. They ignored the implication which Ballou was quick to expose, that Arminianism puts into the hands of the individual the choice between being saved or holding out through all eternity against the love of God.

The essentials of Ballou's thought resulted from a compromise between Deism and the Bible. The deistic influence, as has been seen, came close to destroying his Christian faith. But he was able to overcome the pangs of doubt and to construct a theology which combined the finest of the Enlightenment with a Biblical view of God and man. The end result was a supernatural rationalism. He, on the one hand, believed firmly in the Biblical account of the life, miracles, and resurrection of Christ. He felt the Bible contained a revelation of the Deity and so was at the center of the Christian faith. But God has also given to man that which distinguishes him from the beasts--reason. With god-given reason man is capable of studying God's Word and finding the true purpose of creation and what God expects of him.

Ballou's supposition was that all parts of the Scriptures can be understood in the light of the central truth of God's love for His children. This led to many

strained interpretations of Biblical texts, especially in his early years of preaching when he freely indulged in allegorization and cabalistic interpretation of irreconcilable texts. In his later years he tended to outgrow this approach and to interpret the Scriptures in a more natural manner. That he made many serious errors is to be expected; he was not alone in this, however. Later abandoning the allegorization of the New Testament passages which speak of a second coming of Christ, he interpreted these in the light of the apocalyptic sayings in the gospels which refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Mistaken though he may have been in this, he at least recognized that these passages should not be construed to refer to hell fire and damnation in a future state of existence.

Ballou's interpretation of the Old Testament was definitely ahead of his time. He recognized the important truth that the Israelites of old believed that man received just recompense for his actions in this life and that they had no conception of a future state of rewards and punishment.

His great contribution was that he translated these issues into language that the people could understand. He would brook no retreat into the obscure regions of metaphysics. If a doctrine were reasonable--and God gave man reason--it was true. If not, it was to be discarded.

Such was the duty of the truly religious man: to accept no

belief which could not be defended rationally. Obscurantism found no ally in Hosea Ballou.

Since Ballou was primarily a controversialist, much of his writing is cast in the form of debate. Much of this material is of an ephemeral nature except to the investigator in the field of religious history. But of lasting value is the truly great Treatise on Atonement. Its brilliant examination of the varieties of theological thought, though expressed in the rural English of the early nineteenth century, is still rewarding reading. Its theory of atonement should be considered seriously by those who place Christ, as a revelation of God, at the center of their faith. Throughout--despite its sharp criticism and, at times, irreverent wit--it breathes the piety of a great soul who is utterly committed to the faith that religion can be reasonable.

This dissertation has attempted to show that the contributions of Hosea Ballou to American religious history were great, although not generally recognized or appreciated. He had won the battle against the trinity, the traditional theories of atonement, and the Calvinistic view of man, in the Universalist denomination before the Unitarians were willing to take a stand within the Congregational establishment. He was truly a unitarian before the Unitarians. Whereas Unitarianism was more or less restricted to the higher social classes, unitarian Universalism was a movement among

the people. The stern grip of Calvinism was broken by the efforts of simple, unlearned men, of whom Ballou was the foremost.

It was a humane theology which Ballou vigorously preached for so many years. Destroying the theories of the infinity of sin and a vicarious atonement, he substituted for them theories more in line with man's highest insight of God. The Father is not angry at His children, but, rather, man misunderstands God. God does not need to be reconciled; it is man. God is unchangeable love and will remain so through all eternity. Christ was sent to man as an expression of the Father's love. Ballou made Christ the proper object of imitation for man, the gift of God for the reconciliation of His children.

Unlike the later liberals, Hosea Ballou did not take an overly optimistic view of man in his life on earth. He looked on him as misguided, and, in many cases, degraded. But he did not believe him to be utterly depraved. It was a great faith in the potentiality of man which led Ballou to see him as akin to the nature of God and Christ. Because man is a "heavenly extraction" he can be guided back to the path of the true life of virtue and love. It is not necessary to threaten eternal, or, for that matter, limited punishment in a future world. He taught that man will respond to his higher nature if he is shown that sin cannot be in

league with happiness, that holiness and happiness are inseparably connected.

It is indisputable that Hosea Ballou was the foremost man and the greatest influence in the Universalist denomination of his day. As a denomination Universalism has failed to capture the world, but as an outlook on life it has made great strides. Few there are in Protestantism who would take a stand for endless punishment; many eliminate entirely the thought of future punishment from their belief. It is unlikely that the Anselmic and the Grotian views of atonement are widely held. Few now believe God to be partial toward his creatures. Hosea Ballou's thought has had a great liberalizing effect on American religion. His life and thought, so long neglected, should be studied so that he may be given the recognition that he deserves.

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is devoted to a study of the life and thought of Hosea Ballou (1771-1852), the most prominent of the leaders of American Universalism. No major work has been published in this field since 1889; there has never been a careful examination of his thought and an attempt to trace its sources.

Ballou was the son of a Calvinistic Baptist minister. At eighteen he was converted to Universalism and began preaching the new "heresy" in about 1791 on a Calvinistic basis.

Between 1791 and 1795 Ballou's thought went through a radical transformation. This study attempts to show that the resultant unitarianism of Ballou was the fruit of his reading of Ethan Allen's deistical work, Reason the Only Oracle of Man. Allen, with his great stress on reason, destroyed Ballou's faith in the doctrines of the trinity and the divinity of Christ, the infinity of sin, and the traditional theories of the atonement. With the help of Charles Chauncy's Salvation of All Men, which justified not only his belief in Universal salvation but also helped him to substitute the Arian for the trinitarian view of Christ, and to view the atonement as the reconciliation of man to God and not vice versa; and Ferdinand Olivier Petitpierre's Thoughts on the

Divine Goodness, which helped him to see Christ's atonement as an expression of God's love, and also gave him a firm base for a theory of determinism; Ballou began the reconstruction of his religious thought. His first sermon on a unitarian and Arian base was preached in 1795. Within ten years, through the power of his argumentation, and against the opposition of the prominent Universalist John Murray, Ballou had converted the Universalist ministry to unitarianism. In 1805 his new thought was fully systematized in A Treatise on Atonement, a brilliant piece of reasoning and debating expressed in the language of rural America.

Ballou's Arian view of Christ eventually gave way to the Socinian view, under the influence of the writings of the English Unitarian Joseph Priestley. Liberalization and modernization of his Biblical interpretation is also evident by the time his Works were published in 1832.

Hosea Ballou's early ministry was spent in circuit riding, after which he settled in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and Salem, Massachusetts. He began a ministry of almost thirty-five years in Boston in 1817, where his vigorous preaching was responsible for a rapid growth of Universalism. Although he was a unitarian long before the Unitarian movement began, Ballou was not welcomed by that group which, for social and doctrinal reasons, avoided association with the Universalists.

This dissertation compares the thought of Ballou with that of William Ellery Channing, the most effective spokesman of the Unitarians, on vital issues between the two denominations.

Whereas in the early days Universalists had been content to oppose the orthodox on the basis of a limited future punishment, in 1817 Ballou concluded that no future punishment could be demonstrated from Scripture. His new views were partially responsible for the Restorationist Controversy which led to the secession of a small group of Universalists who insisted that a limited future punishment was necessary in God's plan. Ballou set forth his views in An Examination of the Doctrine of Future Retribution.

Hosea Ballou died in 1852, beloved and esteemed as the "Father" of the Universalist denomination. His effect on the rise of American religious liberalism was great. He was responsible for the conversion of Universalism to a unitarian base, a reasonable theory of atonement, and for warming the heart of the God of Calvinism.

## AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ernest Cassara was born in Everett, Massachusetts, on June 5, 1925, the son of Gaetano and Amelia Cassara. He was educated in the public school system, and was graduated from Everett High School in 1944.

Mr. Cassara's education included attendance at the Leland Powers School of Theatre and Radio in Boston in 1945 and in the Department of Extension, Boston University. He served as announcer and news editor at Radio Stations in Worcester and Brockton before pursuing theological studies. He received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from Tufts College in 1952, and the Bachelor of Divinity degree from Crane Theological School, Tufts University, in 1954.

Mr. Cassara is an ordained Unitarian minister and has been pastor of the First Parish Church in Billerica, Massachusetts, since 1953. He is married and the father of three children.

Mr. Cassara taught in the Extension Department of Emerson College from 1949 to 1952 and is now Assistant Professor of Church History at Crane Theological School, Tufts University. He is Librarian of the Universalist Historical Society.

