

Ballou Maturin Murray

Biography of Rev. Hosea Ballou



Maturin Ballou
Biography of Rev. Hosea Ballou

http://www.litres.ru/pages/biblio_book/?art=23164939

Biography of Rev. Hosea Ballou:

Содержание

AUTHOR'S PREFACE	4
CHAPTER I.	6
CHAPTER II.	11
CHAPTER III.	18
CHAPTER IV.	34
CHAPTER V.	48
CHAPTER VI.	60
CHAPTER VII.	84
CHAPTER VIII.	98
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	99

Maturin M. Ballou

Biography of Rev.

Hosea Ballou

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

To say that the author experiences a degree of diffidence in writing upon the theme and subject of these pages, would but inadequately express his true feelings on taking up the pen for this object. But he does it with a purpose of strict adherence to facts, nor will any matter be suppressed or one iota added to the truth. No one who shall read a dozen pages herein relating to the early life of Rev. Hosea Ballou, but will at once acquit the author of any false pride as it regards chronicling the events and circumstances of the subject's life. He is most happy to state the facts literally, and he is satisfied as to the verdict that every unprejudiced mind will render.

It may be said that a son cannot write a faithful history of a parent – that such a production must needs be partial, – though we have numerous instances of the contrary. To such an objection the writer would reply, that there is but one side to truth, and it is this, and this only, that the reader will find in these pages. He offers no labored extenuation or defence, – there

are no circumstances that require it; no appeal or pleading for a verdict of acquittal, – for there are no charges to refute; but he gives a simple, unvarnished biography of a true Christian and a faithful disciple of the gospel, whose whole life, even from earliest youth, has been a beautiful and consistent tribute to truth. For some time previous to the decease of the subject of this biography the author contemplated the present work, and for this purpose has, at various times, kept minutes relative to dates of his father's movements; and he has also been briefly assisted by memoranda and short articles from his father's pen, which are embodied herein, relative to his feelings concerning himself and his doctrine. The framework, so to speak, of the book, has therefore been in hand for a considerable period; and the placing of it in a proper form for the printer has been all the author has attempted since the death of his respected father.

M. M. Ballou.

Boston, Sept., 1852.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY

The gratitude of mankind has not failed to record with honor the names of those who have been the inventors of useful improvements in the arts, or the authors of scientific discoveries, of brave warriors and wise statesmen; ancient history reveals to us the time when the inventors of letters and the plough, were revered as divinities. If there are any who are actually worthy of being remembered by the world, they are those who have proved themselves, by the lives they have led, and by their holy teachings, to be benefactors of the human family, and true followers of Christ.

It is conceded by all, that biography is a most important species of history. Through its agency, men who have been distinguished for merit, talent, or any peculiar virtue, are remembered, and, though they may be personally lost to us, yet the good influence they exerted during their lives, is made to continue for our benefit. The biography of any eminent individual must be, in some degree, a chronicle of the times in which he lived, and thus, though the production may be of the most humble character, the pages of history are enriched, and the records of the past perfected. We think it was the Rev. John Ewart, M. A., a noted English divine, who set it down as

one of the most interesting reflections relative to biographical reading, that we may see and know in heaven, those whose life and excellent works we have read of here. This is, perhaps, rather a peculiar argument, but not inappropriate in this connection.

For our own part, we have ever perused, with the liveliest satisfaction, any book of a biographical character, and believe that such works are almost universally read with avidity and profit. With living men and present measures, there is generally some prejudice or passion connected. But when death has set his seal upon a worthy character, and he has departed from the din and conflict of the world, then we can receive the full benefit of his example. For it is very true that genius rarely shines with full lustre until death hath unroofed it of envy. It will, therefore, be my object in these pages to adhere to those facts best fitted to illustrate the personal character of Mr. Ballou, and to furnish the means of estimating aright the services he rendered to his own and subsequent times, that his memory may remain to us in evergreen freshness and beauty, and thus renew to posterity the savor of a good life.

It is the usual practice with biographers to dwell at length and in explanation upon the discoveries and doctrines of the object of their labors, forgetting, apparently, that these things are almost universally known already, and that the main design of a biography should be to make public and illustrate the private life of those whom the world already knows as philosophers, statesmen, divines, or otherwise. It is said of Mallet, that he wrote

the life of Lord Bacon, and forgot that he was a philosopher. But this is rarely the case, for it is the prevailing custom, and has ever been, to forget the man in the remembrance of the philosopher. It is the traits of personal character, those slight, yet important incidents and anecdotes which mark the individual's every-day life, that, when preserved and recorded, form the great interest and charm of biography. Plutarch, the writer of half a hundred lives, in that of Alexander says: – "As painters labor the likeness in the face, so must we be permitted to strike off the features of the soul, in order to give a real likeness of these great men."

Hence, biography written in a true spirit, while something quite different from history, is, nevertheless, an important supplement and aid to it, throwing light into its dark corners, and explaining its obscurity. For the historian, in the spirit of the painter or poet, must dispense with all the minutiae of detail which would interfere with the effect of his conception. He has a broad canvas, crowded with many figures, and in the grouping of these, the bringing out of strong points, the handling of the light and shade, many minor points must be obliterated, or thrown into the background. He presents us with truth, indeed, but not with the whole truth. The historian shows us the warrior in the hour of battle, on the field of review, or in the pomp of a military triumph; the statesman in the light of a senatorial victory, as he appears before the broad gaze of the world; the divine clad in his sacerdotal robe, at the high altar, or in the pulpit, at the moment of addressing listening crowds, and swaying the hearts of men by

the fervor of his eloquence.

The biographer, on the other hand, dealing with individuals and not with masses, painting portraits and not groups, is permitted a more elaborate finish in the treatment of his subject. He shows us the soldier not only in the hour of battle, but in the privacy of his tent, or in the bosom of his family; the statesman in his study, or unbending from his public tasks in social intercourse; the divine in the daily walks of life, in the discharge of parochial duties, amid the toils and trials common to all humanity. The biographer is often at variance with the historian in treating the same subject. He often shows us the littleness of the great; for many a prominent actor in the world's great drama wears a mask upon the public stage that conceals his real features. Few men are found abroad, beneath the searching light of heaven, with the same aspect of soul, the same undisguised native promptings, visible in every act and word, as characterize them at their own firesides, and surrounded by those who know them most intimately. It is truly going "behind the scenes" to enter the domestic circle, for there the artificial man must be dropped, the cloak that is sometimes worn before the eyes of the world is laid aside, and we have the soul unmasked indeed.

It will be our endeavor, in the following pages, to illustrate the perfect harmony of a Christian character, the daily beauty of whose private life accorded with that of his public career; through whose existence religion ran like a silver thread, linking all its component parts together, – who "showed the path

to heaven and led the way." The world is anxious, when it contemplates the memory of such an exalted character, to know the steps by which the subject rose to the situation which he filled, as well as the incidents by which he terminated his noted career. We are gratified to observe such characters in the private walks of life, to follow them into their families and closets, and to discover thus how those who challenged the respect and admiration of the times in which they lived, conducted themselves amid those cares and duties common alike to the humble and the exalted. These remarks will introduce the reader to the plan of the present work.

CHAPTER II.

BIRTH AND PARENTAGE

Hosea Ballou was born, April 30th, 1771, in the town of Richmond, New Hampshire, a small village situated in the county of Cheshire, in the southern part of the State; at that time little more than an uncleared wilderness. The site of his birth-place is now a most attractive and lovely valley, scooped out from the rough hills and mountains of the Granite State, and known as Ballou's Dale; surrounded by the most romantic scenery, the beauties of which he used to dwell upon in after years, and to sing their praise in verse. The neighboring country is of a bold and rugged character, and is to this day but thinly settled. It was here that he first drew breath in an humble cottage-home among the hills.

The influence of nature in the formation of character has been much insisted on by metaphysicians, and not without ample reason. The qualities of men are found to assimilate very closely to the characteristics of the country they inhabit. Thus the mountaineer is bold, rugged, hardy, independent, and fond of liberty. In Europe, surrounded on every hand by despotism, Alpine Switzerland has preserved its political independence for ages. But especially is the power of natural scenery witnessed in the nurture of deep religious feeling.

"The groves were God's first temples."

The first prayer uttered by man was breathed to his Creator in a garden, among the olive trees of Eden. The disciples of our Saviour listened to their Lord in the deep wilderness, in the awful solitude of rugged mountains. In the heart of mighty forests and by the shores of ever-rushing rivers, the littleness of man, contrasting with the grandeur of creation, speaks to his awakened soul of the omnipotence and goodness of God. Where men are banded together in great cities, in the midst of splendors and triumphs of art, they are apt to feel a pride and self-reliance which abandon them in the face of nature. Apart from the frequent spectacle of man's handiwork, the dweller in the country learns how all human skill is impotent to imitate the smallest feature in the great work of creation; to create the lightest blade of grass that bends in the summer breeze; to fabricate even the minutest grain of sand that sparkles by the river shore. Then, as he lifts his eyes from earth to heaven, and beholds at night the starry host above him wheeling unerringly upon their appointed courses, his mind cannot but acknowledge the existence of God, and the immeasurable greatness of his attributes.

It will be seen, in the course of this narrative, that the influences we have alluded to must have produced a powerful effect upon a mind constituted like that of the subject of this biography.

In relation to the genealogy of the family, we have it in detail as far back, on the paternal side, as his great-great-grandfather, Matteaurian Ballou, – so the name was spelled by him, – who came from England, though a Frenchman by descent, about the year 1640. He occupied a portion of a royal grant of land, about that time purchased from the Narraganset tribe of Indians, by the agent of the crown. This tract was situated in the present State of Rhode Island, where descendants of the family still reside. This Matteaurian Ballou's oldest son was named John, whose second son was named Matteaurian, who, also, had a son named Matteaurian, who in turn had eleven children, – six sons and five daughters. The youngest of the family was named Hosea, the subject of these memoirs.

His father, Rev. Maturin Ballou, was remarkable for his unostentatious manner, his forgiving spirit and meekness, and the strict consistency of a life devoted, as he truly believed, to the service and glory of his Divine Master. He remained a highly respected and influential member of the Baptist church until the time of his death, at the age of eighty-two years. When his son differed from him so materially in faith, though it sorely grieved the parent's heart, it never for one moment influenced him in his affection for his child. His conduct towards him was uniformly kind and solicitous, as was also the son's regard for his father of the most loving and respectful character. Whenever referring to his father, the subject of this biography never failed to do so with that respect and honor for his memory that was ever cherished

by him, and which formed a beautiful trait of his character.

In this connection it may not be inappropriate nor uninteresting to say a few words concerning the brothers and sisters of Hosea, the youngest member of the family. Benjamin, the oldest, was a man of strict integrity, and possessed a penetrating and powerful intellect. For some years the power of early influences and associations moulded his life, and he preached the Baptist religion, but was subsequently converted to Universalism, by his younger brother, Hosea, and lived and died in its faith, continuing to the good old age of eighty-two years. This was the grandfather of Rev. Dr. Ballou, of Medford, Mass.; Rev. William S. Ballou, of Strafford, Vt., and Rev. Levi Ballou, of Orange, Mass. Maturin was the second son, who was also a Baptist minister, of strict morality and honorable career, but who died at the early age of thirty-five years. In his manuscript, Mr. Ballou says, relative to this brother: "He grew very liberal in his sentiments towards the last of his labors, and was one of the most loving and devout Christians that I ever knew." David was the third son, and he also preached the Baptist faith, but, like the eldest brother, was ere long persuaded of the truth of the doctrine of universal salvation, which he preached for many years, possessing a strong and well balanced mind, and powerful argumentative abilities. He died at the age of eighty-two. This was the father of Rev. Moses Ballou, of Bridgeport, Ct. The fourth son was named Nathan, a man of remarkable mental and physical strength, who gave his attention mainly to

agricultural pursuits, and who lived to be nearly eighty years of age. This was the grandfather of the present Rev. Russel A. Ballou, of West Bridgewater, Mass. Stephen was the fifth son and combining many of the best qualities of his elder brothers, and possessing a most upright and conscientious disposition, was yet remarkable for the endowment of a large degree of native wit and good humor. He also devoted himself to agriculture, and lived to nearly the age of seventy. All of these brothers were possessed of a handsome competency, realized by their own economy and industry. The daughters were variously espoused, and lived, all but one, who died at the age of twenty, to be venerable and honored in years, and with a numerous offspring.

On the maternal side, these children were descended from Lydia Harris, daughter of Richard Harris, who, like his ancestors, was a Quaker. His forefathers came to this country to escape the persecution of the seventeenth century in England, when the infatuated and tyrannical Charles was oppressing his subjects by restricting the freedom of industry, and billeting soldiers upon the people in times of peace; when the private papers of citizens were searched on mere suspicion, and when the bigoted Laud ruled with as high a hand and reckless a purpose in the church, as his royal master did in the state. Citizens claiming the right of freely uttering what they honestly believed to be true, on the subject of religion, were fined, whipped, and imprisoned. Ministers and educated citizens were branded on the forehead, their noses slit, and their ears cropped, for dissenting from Popish

rites and ceremonies. To escape such intolerable persecution, Quakers crossed the ocean. But, alas! persecution followed them even in the wilds of America. Individuals who had left home, friends, country and all, to gain the privilege of worshipping the Almighty after the dictates of their own consciences, did not hesitate to deny others that privilege for which they had themselves sacrificed so much, simply because they differed from them in form of faith.

We should not omit to mention in this place the remarkable degree of affection that ever actuated the subject of this biography towards each and all of the members of his father's extensive family; and this feeling was reciprocal too; especially have we personally observed this on the part of the brothers, whom he frequently visited, through the entire period of their lives. Much older than himself, as far back as our memory of them extends they were venerable and grey-haired men, and treated Hosea more like a son than a brother. Their meetings together, from time to time, were reunions of great satisfaction and happiness. Fully admitting his superior scriptural knowledge and judgment, they delighted to converse upon the theme of religion, and mutually to express the strength of their faith and the joy they found in believing. It was this younger brother who converted them to the belief of God's impartial and free grace, and they died at last with their minds freed from every doubt as it regarded the subject. One or two of these brothers had believed what was called Universalism quite as early as had

Hosea, but they had believed it as it was then taught on the old Calvinistic principle, which made it in reality anything but Universalism. It was from this ill-defined platform, this faith of inconsistencies, that Hosea brought their minds to embrace that creed which is now acknowledged as the doctrine of the Universalist denomination. When he spoke to them and of them, it was with that tender and affectionate regard with which his heart was ever filled to overflowing.

I have taken some pains to state the foregoing facts of genealogy thus carefully, merely for the sake of completeness, and not for the purpose of establishing the fact that the family is "an old one." The idea that to be able to trace back one's pedigree any great length of time, imparts any degree of merit or distinction in itself, is a palpable absurdity, inasmuch as the further back we refer ourselves in our origin, the more nearly do we approximate to the same ancestry with the veriest serf in the world. Sir Thomas Overbury said of a man who boasted of his ancestry, that he was like a potato plant, – the best thing belonging to him was under ground! Mr. Ballou was no pensioner upon the dead. The laurels that surrounded the brow of his riper years were self-earned, and worthy of emulation.

CHAPTER III.

EARLY LIFE

The life of Hosea Ballou may be said to have commenced with one of the saddest of bereavements, for at the tender age of two years he had the misfortune to lose his maternal parent, who died, leaving him the youngest of eleven children. Thus it was his unhappy lot never to know the fond regard and pure affection of a mother, that holiest tie of humanity. Concerning this matter, Mr. Ballou says, in the brief memoir or outline of his life with which he has furnished us, "My mother died when I was about two years old, and, of course, I do not remember her; but from all I can learn of my mother, I am satisfied that she was of a most tender and kind disposition. But the treasure was gone before I could realize its value." The care and guidance of the family then fell upon the father, whose means for providing for his children's necessities were of the most simple and limited character. This parent, a pious and devout preacher of the Calvinistic Baptist denomination, endeavored, to the best of his ability, to bring up his large family to fear and serve a God who was merciful to those whom from all eternity he had elected to be heirs of eternal life, but who was full of holy wrath towards the greater portion of mankind; – a faith which the honest parent little thought, at that time, his youngest son, through the instrumentality of

Providence, would so successfully battle against in the spiritual warfare of after years.

In this connection, Mr. Ballou says: – "We were all taught, and in our youth all believed, that we were born into the world wholly depraved, and under the curse of a law which doomed every son and daughter of Adam to eternal woe. But at the same time God had made provision for a select number of the human family, whereby they would be saved by the operations of the divine Spirit, which would result in what was called conversion, sometime during the life of those elected. Those who were not elected would remain without any effectual calling, die, and be forever miserable. When I was a youth it was the sentiment of all Christian people, as far as I knew, that not more than one in a thousand of the human family would be saved from endless condemnation.

"Youth were taught to be moral, but that morality was no security against divine wrath. The conversion of the soul from the state of nature in which all men were born into the world, was the only security. One of the worst things ever taught to youth was, that in this world there is more enjoyment in the ways of vice, iniquity, sin, and unrighteousness, than in the ways of obedience to the commandments of God. But we were taught at the same time that the wicked were running an awful risk, for should they die without repentance, their everlasting condemnation was sure. All the risk there was, lay in the possibility that death might be sudden, and give no time for repentance. But the fact that

there is *in* the way of strict morality, *in* the path of true religion, *in* the road of righteousness, all the rational enjoyment which our nature is capable of, and that any departure from right is an equal departure from true happiness, was not taught, to my knowledge, at that time. Nor did I ever understand this great truth until taught it by the Scriptures, and my study of them, and by my own experience."

It was the conscientious belief of Mr. Ballou's father that he ought not to receive any remuneration whatever, either pecuniary or otherwise, for his professional services; and, as he devoted himself with the utmost zeal and the most untiring assiduity to his calling, and was possessed of little or no personal estate, his family were all obliged to labor very hard, merely to obtain a simple subsistence. But "even in this was Heaven ordinant." Thus, from his earliest childhood, Mr. Ballou was accustomed to toil and labor, and this too under the hardships of a scanty supply of food and clothing. So destitute even of the most ordinary articles of raiment, or the means of procuring it, was his father's family, in the times of his boyhood, that many a long week has he passed without an under garment of any kind upon his person, and without shoes or stockings for his feet, even during the inclemencies of winter, when his employment would frequently call him abroad for a large portion of the day!

Notwithstanding all these privations and hardships, there was no repining; the rich glow of health was upon his cheek, and a light and happy heart, in spite of iron fortune, throbbed in his

young breast. Though such was his early experience, and such the vicissitudes of his youth, yet in subsequent years he was destined to enjoy freely of the liberal bounties of Providence, and, through his own frugality and industry, to be able to give with open hands in charity to others. In these years of prosperity and honor, when revered and beloved by a whole denomination, and when ranked among the most powerful intellects of the age, did he forget, or desire to conceal, the humble character of his youth, its hardships and trials, or the companions of his early days? Let those answer to whom he has related these things in censure of false pride and the vanity of the world. Would it become us, then, who have seen and realized the full bent of this noble spirit in him, to fail to speak clearly of these matters? We opine not, and therefore these records will be found to be full and complete.

The reader will probably agree with us, that there is something exceedingly striking, as well as most affecting, in the domestic circumstances to which I have alluded. The character of Mr. Ballou's father, reminds us of one of those stern old Cameronians of Scotland, so well described by one of the first writers of the age. With but little sympathy for his creed, we must nevertheless respect his sincerity; nor can we wonder at all, with his education in the faith which he preached, and hampered by the illiberal spirit of the period, which seemed to mildew every generous prompting of the human heart, that he clung to it with inflexible tenacity. But we must contemplate with unqualified admiration the heroic self-denial, the martyr-like firmness, with which this

servant of the Lord pursued what he believed to be the path of his duty, amidst circumstances of such extraordinary deprivation. Truly, he abandoned all to serve his Master. His severest trial must have been to witness the privations of his family. A man can endure in his own person what it costs him agony to witness inflicted on those nearer and dearer to him than life itself. The struggles of that little flock, bereft of a mother's tender care and guidance at the very time when they most required it, must have given many an anxiously painful day and night to a father's heart. Yet, we have seen how they were sustained.

This is probably by no means an isolated case of trial. It is but a type of the condition of many of the early settlers in a new country, – in short, a picture of American pioneer life. It is from such beginnings, and under such circumstances, that the most useful and energetic of our countrymen have sprung. It is not to the lap of luxury that we are to look for the source of manly character and manly virtues. The rough nurture of his early years most unquestionably fitted Mr. Ballou for the battle of life which he was destined to fight. It trained him for the long and severe journeyings of his apostolic missions, and it warmed his sympathies for the poor, while it gave him that indifference to ease and luxury which so largely conduces to true mental independence. It taught him also to rely under Providence upon himself; and these early privations, while they strengthened and indurated him, rendered the honorably acquired competence and comforts of his later years in life doubly grateful and acceptable.

Notwithstanding this stern experience of his tender years, and in spite of every hardship, and the severe labor he was obliged to perform under such unpropitious circumstances, still he grew up strong, healthy and vigorous, both in mind and body, possessing a form and face of manly beauty, with expression and intelligence reflected in every feature. In stature he grew to be six feet high, his figure very erect, with finely formed limbs, and a bright, clear blue eye. His whole appearance indicated good health even to advanced old age, his constitution being naturally excellent, and his frugal and temperate habits seconding the kindly purpose of nature. Heaven had marked him for its servant, and breathed into his soul a spirit of energy and unflinching perseverance, that no hardship could quench or diminish. Christ chose his disciples from among the lowly fishermen of Galilee; God herein took an humble but faithful follower from a cottage amidst the mountains.

Although descended from a devout and eloquent preacher of the Scriptures, the reader will at once observe that Mr. Ballou was not indebted in the least particular for the future lustre of his reputation as a powerful and original thinker, writer and teacher of the gospel, to his birth, or early condition in life, but that, on the contrary, he was literally a self-made man, owing his position strictly to individual merit alone. Enjoying none of the educational advantages resulting from wealth, or even from a simple competency, yet he steadily rose above every impending obstacle in his path, to the truly enviable position which he

attained in the hearts of thousands upon thousands who were led through his teachings, both orally and through the productions of his prolific pen, to see their God and Father as he is in all harmony and beauty. Thus it is that poverty of condition and wealth of intellect go often hand in hand.

"Where, in modern history," asks Rev. A. E. Abbott, in his late eulogy upon Mr. Ballou, "can another instance be found of a man laboring under such disadvantages, in the face of such opposition, and yet performing such a work? Those who have heretofore accomplished much in that field, have had all the advantages which the most thorough culture of their times could give. Like the giant of Gath, they have taken the field encased in polished armor; he, like the stripling of Bethlehem, came to the contest with only the shepherd's sling and the smooth stones from the brook."

As no general rule can be adduced for the formation of human character, so long as the power of early association, the influence of education and example, each and severally produce in different individuals exactly opposite effects, so no general rule can be applied as to the result of certain accessory circumstances. Therefore we deduce no result from the mere fact of Mr. Ballou's father having been a professed minister upon the character of his son, having no belief that genius is hereditary, or that paternal authority can influence its natural course. Indeed, the reader is doubtless well aware that the opposition of a father to the natural bent of his child, rarely fails more strongly to develop the

original taste and purpose, generally arousing in the end a spirit of resistance, that is pretty sure to strengthen by opposition.

Before the age of sixteen, by the utmost perseverance, ingenuity, and industry, the subject of this biography had learned to read and write with facility, almost entirely by his own unaided exertions, or with little assistance of any kind; for had there been a school in the neighborhood of Richmond, which was not the case, he could have found no time to attend it, being ever laboriously engaged from morning until night. He learned to form the letters of the alphabet in the following ingenious and original manner, which he related to us when a mere child, we were making the first advances in the use of the pen. After not a little thought and sober calculation as to how he should accomplish his purpose, – for pen, ink and paper were luxuries his father's means could not command, – for paper he substituted thin pieces of birch bark, neatly prepared for the purpose by his own hands, and for pen and ink he used coals taken from the fire. With these rude materials, after the labors of the day were over, seated on the floor, by the light of the fire, – for candles were too expensive to be afforded in the frugal household of his father, – he taught himself to write. A student, actuated by such resolution and determination of purpose, must soon become a proficient, in defiance of every minor obstacle; and thus he speedily improved with these humble means.

Some further idea of the limited means of his father's family, and the extraordinary disadvantages under which his

early progress was made, may be gathered from the fact, that the only books the house contained, or in fact that the family had access to at all, were a Bible, an old dictionary, and a well-thumbed pamphlet of the scriptural story of the tower of Babel. A newspaper in the days of which we write, in the town of Richmond, would have been considered a most rare curiosity. Perhaps this very dearth of literary material led Mr. Ballou to be the more intimate with that volume with which alone no student can be poor, without which the largest library is incomplete. It has been remarked of the sacred volume, that, as the face of nature is bedecked with colors and adornments to render it agreeable to the senses, so its pages are filled with that luxury of poetry and language and incident which commends it to every imagination. Even the half-unbelieving Byron confessed that nothing in literature was finer than the poetry of the Old Testament. Thus the word, like the bow of promise, is gilded with the fairest hues. The solemn march of historical narration, the sublime hymns of triumph, praise and rejoicing, the records of battles and heroic deeds, the familiar narrative, the interesting parable, the pithy proverb, the terse and vigorous delineation of character, the sublime visions of inspired prophecy, are all there. Of almost every style of literary composition there is an example, captivating alike to the humblest reader and the most cultivated critic. It is the beginning and the end of learning. In the midst of the sublimest flights of human genius, amid the most burning words of modern eloquence, introduce a passage of scripture,

and how poor will seem the language and the thoughts by which it is surrounded!

"Within whose sacred pages lies
The mystery of mysteries,"

Need we count that house poor in literary possessions which contains a Bible?

If it be true that there are certain ennobling qualities, to produce which a soil of privation and poverty is requisite, the reader is doubtless already prepared to allow that Mr. Ballou was not deficient in the necessary experience for their possession. A lack of those advantages which are enjoyed in the "schools of human learning" did not lead him in the least to undervalue the humble opportunities for acquiring mental discipline and useful information that every-day life graciously affords to all. But the clear, free river of knowledge and unbounded information, that now pours out its wealth at the feet of the people, was then undiscovered. It has been left to these more modern and favored times for inventions in the arts to so revolutionize the means of disseminating knowledge, as to lay the wealth of wisdom at the poor man's door.

At the age of sixteen he left the paternal roof for the first time, and made a journey on foot to Guildford, Vt., a distance of about forty miles from Richmond. Here he visited an elder brother, and, after working with him upon his farm through the

season, returned to his father's house again in the fall. About one year from the time of his visit to Guildford, he visited another brother who resided in Putney, Vt., where he also labored for a season upon the farm, employing all his leisure moments to the improvement of such simple means as were within his power to command, aided by the greater experience and better mental cultivation of his brother. He remained through that season only at Putney, however, and returned again in the fall of the year to Richmond.

At the age of eighteen he went to Smithfield, R. I., where many of his relations, on the paternal side, were settled. Here also he devoted himself to constant labor during the day, and to the eager perusal of any and all books to which he could obtain access, during the evenings and a large portion of the nights. He remained in Smithfield but about six months, again returning to the place of his nativity. In making these changes he was almost solely actuated by a desire for instruction and general information, and this being his great aim, we have seen how much he improved every available means to consummate it, and thus his exploring and impressible mind was not a little enriched. The time passed at home during the intermediate and subsequent periods to those referred to, was employed by him upon his father's farm, in the tilling of the soil, and in constant efforts to improve his mind. Those who were older than himself were earnestly questioned for their experience. Those who had enjoyed any educational advantages were eagerly sought after,

and regarded by him as favored beings, and their conversation listened to with avidity.

The improvement and development of a mind in this condition, a healthy mind in a healthy body, is exceedingly rapid. It is then

"Wax to receive, and marble to retain."

It seizes eagerly on all the food placed before it, and rapidly digests every acquisition. The condition of a mind with every appliance for improvement at hand, is not unlike that of a person with every variety and quality of food set before him for the gratification of a bodily appetite. Repletion, satiety, and indigestion, follow in one case precisely as in the other. Many of our modern students are crammed and gorged with study. The mental appetite is over-indulged; and an attempt to master too much is doubtless the besetting literary sin of the present day. The cases of mental dyspepsia are as common as those of the body. Sound scholarship consists not so much in the quantity of material consumed, as in the quantity properly prepared for intellectual nurture. A man may possess a fund of encyclopedic knowledge, and yet his mental powers may be weakened by the very process of grasping so many details. He may be good authority to appeal to, but will hardly prove a sound thinker or a good logician. "Not many, but good, books," was the golden advice of a wise man on the formation of a library. Self-

made men, like Mr. Ballou, are apt to make judicious selections in culling the great field of knowledge, while those who pass through a regular, systematic, academic training, are often forced to fill their minds with a mass of matter for which they have no use, and to waste much time in questionable acquirements, simply because in so doing they comply with the requisitions of a prescribed formula.

It was customary for the young men of all classes in those days to pursue athletic exercises, such as pitching the bar, leaping, wrestling, and the like, these being regarded as the surest tests of bodily strength. Possessing a powerful and active frame, he was ever the victor in those sports; and from his marked success among his comrades in this respect, and his fair and impartial disposition, he was universally the umpire in all disputes growing out of these and like contests for superiority that arose between one and another. In the matter of his physical strength, particularly when young, he ever cherished, a laudable degree of pride, and delighted in accomplishing a large amount of work within the hours devoted to labor.

In this connection, Mr. Ballou says: – "I have the comfort, even in my old age, of remembering that I was deemed in our family circle to be a good child, and marked for giving evidence of being less averse to necessary labor than others. Though this contributed somewhat to make me proud, and to think well of myself, in other respects it was of some advantage to me to be held in esteem by my mates, who ever showed that they had a

peculiar regard for me."

Mr. Ballou undoubtedly owed the vigorous health which carried him through the exertions of a life protracted beyond the allotted span, to the athletic training of his youth, in his labors and in his sports. One of the besetting sins of the present mode of education is the almost total neglect of physical training, and the forcing system applied to the mind at the expense of the body. We hear much about sanitary reform and the necessity of exercise; we write and read voluminous treatises on the best mode of preserving bodily health, and almost all of us can talk learnedly upon the subject, and yet in practice we set at naught all our elaborate theories. How rare it is to see a vigorous, ruddy-cheeked student. The ancients were wiser than ourselves in this respect, for with them mental and physical training went hand in hand. A popular form of instruction was that given orally in the open air; and thus, during the very hours of study, the frame was submitted to the healthy influence of pure air. The subject of these memoirs often referred to the pale cheek, stooping form, and defective vision which are characteristics of the American student, and he never failed to inculcate on all proper occasions the preservation of health as a high moral duty.

While of tender age, and in each successive year, he evinced an ardent and constantly increasing desire for scriptural knowledge; and the earliest dawnings of his young mind among his brethren were of a character that gave promise of the Christian grace and excellence to which he attained in after

years. It is interesting and curious to trace the unconscious, and, so to speak, the providential adaptation of the early life to the future calling of riper experience. Mr. Ballou says, in relation to this subject: – "I was remarkably inquisitive, even when a mere boy, about doctrines. I was fond of reasoning on doctrinal points, studied and talked much upon the subject of free will and necessity. I well remember to have surprised my honored father with such a question as the following: '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?' The question troubled my father, and I let it pass without an answer."

These frequent questions had the effect of causing the father much uneasiness of mind, and he used often to express great solicitude and fear for the present and future welfare of his son. Many were his endeavors to convince Hosea of the dangerous character of the sentiments that seemed to be springing up spontaneously in his heart, but the unprofitable nature of these efforts soon became apparent, from the fact that the simple, natural arguments of the son confounded the father. Boy as he was, he yet would not take the assertions of faith for argument, but insisted upon reason, and understanding at all times the "root of the matter."

To the honor of this truly pious and devout parent, it should be remembered, however, that these controversies never elicited an

unchristian spirit, or the least anger towards his child. This was a natural and beautiful characteristic of his father's disposition.

CHAPTER IV. BECOMES A PROFESSOR OF RELIGION

At the age of nineteen, there being what was termed a reformation in the town of Richmond, Mr. Ballou was induced, believing it to be his duty, to become a professor of religion, and accordingly at that time he joined the Baptist church, of which his father was pastor, in the month of January, 1789. It is very evident that he was partly induced to this circumstance by the bearing of external circumstances and the immediate associations about him, such as observing the conduct of others of his own age, who at that time made a formal and public profession of faith, and also by what he knew very well to be his father's earnest desire. It seems, therefore, that these matters, rather than any earnest mental conviction of faith, were instrumental in leading him to join the church as he did, — inasmuch as none of those objections which he had often made to his father's belief, had yet been cleared up to his mind.

But this joining of the church was plainly of immediate advantage to him, as it led him to think still more seriously and earnestly upon the subject of religion; but, owing to early prejudices, and his limited means of acquiring information, or of possessing himself of any books upon such subjects as would

have been useful to him, his progress towards the light of truth was but slow. Mr. Ballou says, in relation to this conversion: – "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." His connection with his father's church, though it continued but a short period comparatively, seems to have made no slight impression upon his mind and feelings, for he says: – "I have always felt towards this people (the Baptist denomination) 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."

In his researches and reading concerning the creed that he had now publicly professed, he found it impossible to bring his heart to conform to the doctrine of eternal reprobation, and this in itself, as he afterwards remarked, was an evidence of no inconsiderable importance, to his mind, that it could not be true; for why should his Heavenly Father have implanted in his heart an earnest desire for the salvation of all mankind, unless that desire was susceptible of gratification, as is every appetite, mental or physical, with which we are endowed by nature? Such thoughts caused him much and incessant anxiety of mind, because the very fact of his entertaining them, if the doctrine he

had professed was true, endangered his eternal salvation; while, on the other hand, if this creed was not that taught by God's revealed word, then he was needlessly suffering, to a degree that greatly depressed him.

No wonder that this double incentive led him to search the Scriptures with the utmost care and attention, and to weigh and decide in his own mind the relation that one portion bears to another, and finally, with the help of Heaven, to make up his mind as to the true spirit and doctrine of the whole. The reader can easily imagine the fervent prayers he uttered, the sleepless nights he passed, and the arduous study he performed, in his search for the light of truth. After all this anxious solicitude, this solitary mental struggle, this prayerful communication with Heaven, he at length declared himself a believer in the *final* salvation of the whole human family.

Great was the surprise, disappointment, and chagrin of his father and friends generally. Being looked up to by the young men of his own age as a sort of leader in their secular plans and games, the influence of his example was greatly feared as operating upon the younger portion of the church; and as his joining it had been the occasion of much rejoicing at the time, so his declaration of unbelief in its faith was the cause of a proportionate degree of sorrow. His new declaration was at once pronounced to be downright heresy, and he was accordingly excommunicated from his father's church, the document with which he was honored on the occasion carefully stating that nothing was found against him,

but that he believed in the doctrine that God would finally save all men.

In relation to this subject, Mr. Ballou says: – "Above all else, my theological bias of mind predominated, and engrossed most of my attention. As I had formerly been in the habit, while with the Baptists, of speaking in their meetings, and of offering up prayer at conference meetings, I now sometimes spoke my sentiments at meetings in my brother's house. The church of which I was still a member thought it a duty to call me to answer for the course I had taken, and I was called upon to meet the accusation of believing in the salvation of all men. I attended, but did not feel it my duty to deny the charge, or to renounce my belief. I was therefore excommunicated from the church, my letter of excommunication carefully stating that no fault was found in me, my belief in the salvation of all men excepted. I shall ever remember the tears which I shed on this solemn occasion."

It was about this period that Mr. Ballou, ever in search of improvement, possessed himself of some book of a liberal religious character as to the sentiments it inculcated, when his father, chancing to see him reading it, told him decidedly that he would not have Universalist books in his house. Promptly acquiescing, as he always did, in his father's directions, a few days subsequent, the parent, on returning home, found Hosea reading a book beside the wood-pile, out of doors. "What book are you reading there?" he asked. "A *Universalist* book," replied the son, respectfully. An expression of dissatisfaction escaped the father,

as he turned away and entered the house. Watching until his son had placed the book in the wood-pile, and left the spot, the parent resolved to possess himself of it, and perhaps even destroy it. But, lo! when he opened it, he found it was the Bible.

In an article written many years subsequent, relative to his conversion to the faith of God's impartial grace, Mr. Ballou says: – "I found, when conversing upon the subject, that my Calvinistic tenets could be made either to result in universal salvation, or to compel me to acknowledge the partiality of the divine favor. This gave me no small inquietude of mind, as I was unable to derive satisfaction from sentiments which I could not defend. That which more than anything else contributed to turn my thoughts seriously towards the belief of Universalism, was the ardent desire with which I found myself exercised that sinners might be brought to repentance and salvation. I found it utterly impossible to bring my feelings to consent to the doctrine of eternal reprobation, and I was compelled either to allow that such feelings were sinful, or that my Heavenly Father, in giving them to me, had implanted an evidence in favor of the salvation of all men, the force of which I found no means to resist."

As to Mr. Ballou's having been brought up in the faith of Calvinism, it was not without its benefits upon his after life, for it gave to him a most unlimited and perfect knowledge of the various items of faith professed by that sect, as well as the common tenets of all those who believe in the partial salvation only of the great human family. Owing to an early desire to

understand the doctrine of Christianity aright, while yet of tender age he became familiar with the arguments used in support of predestination, election, reprobation, the fall of man, the penal suffering of Christ for the elect, and many other items of creed relating to the moral agency of man. Concerning this subject, Mr. Ballou says: – "As to the doctrine of Calvinism, in which my honored father was a believer, and which doctrine he preached until nearly the end of his public labors, my acquaintance with its various tenets, while quite a youth, was by no means very limited, owing to the pious endeavors of a parent whose affection for his children rendered him extremely anxious for their spiritual welfare, and to an early desire of my own to understand the doctrine of Christianity correctly." It was necessary that he should understand these matters as he did, and as he could only do, by serving an apprenticeship to them, so to speak, in order the better to enable him to refute them in after years, when he should be arrayed in a moral conflict against them. Thus the pious and well-meant endeavors of his parent to inculcate the principles of his own faith in the mind of his child were but a part of the well ordained purpose of the Almighty, in raising up an able champion for the gospel of truth.

Mr. Ballou says, referring to the period just previous to his declaration of faith and consequent excommunication: – "In the spring after I joined the church in Richmond, I went, with my brother Stephen and our cousin Jeremiah Harris, to the town of Westfield, in New York. This town is now called Harford.

Here we labored together during that season, attending Elder Brown's meeting. He was of the Baptist order. Even before I left home my mind had become somewhat shaken in regard to the doctrine of endless punishment. I found it utterly out of my power to reconcile it with what all Christians professed of love to the unconverted; nor could I reconcile it with many plain declarations of Scripture; but I was by no means persuaded that salvation was for all men. My brother, knowing that I had trials of mind on this great subject, expressed a desire that I should have a conversation with Elder Brown relative to it, hoping thereby that my doubts would be removed. A conference was therefore appointed, at the house of one of the elder's deacons. There were a number present, and the elder requested me to name some passage of Scripture which to my mind favored universal salvation; expressing at the same time perfect confidence that he should be able to show me that the passage did by no means favor such doctrine. I opened to the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and read the eighteenth verse, as follows: – '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 elder did not appear to be at all acquainted with the text, for, instead of directing his remarks to it, he seemed to wander far off, and to talk very loud, and nothing to the subject. When he paused, I again read the text, and asked the elder if the same *all men* mentioned in the first part of the text, were not mentioned in

the last? This simple question seemed to embarrass his mind; he was evidently out of humor, and manifested a bitter spirit, which being discovered by my brother, caused him to desire that the conversation should close, and it did. This circumstance tended rather to strengthen my mind in favor of universal and impartial grace, and to induce a more thorough examination of the Scriptures and the subject. I had no other book than the Bible, and all my early education lay like a broad sheet to cover that book from my vision. But one or two passages were found, and from them I found my way to others which seemed to agree with the first, and it was not long before I was astonished at my ignorance of the Scriptures. The Bible was no longer the book it had been to me. I became entirely convinced of the truth of the doctrine of Universalism."

It was therefore in the town of Westfield, N. Y., that Mr. Ballou came fully to believe in the final salvation of all mankind. We do not mean to be understood that he came at once to the full belief of the doctrine that he afterwards taught, but that he made at this time the earliest and most important advance towards the belief which he subsequently declared, and which has since become the creed of nine-tenths of the Universalist denomination. At this period he believed the doctrine, as he says he preached it not many months afterwards, being the fall before he was twenty-one, "when I began to speak in public," he says, "believing and preaching universal salvation, on the Calvinistic principles of atonement and imputed righteousness." The few

Universalists that then existed, having obtained proof, to their satisfaction, that none of the human family would suffer endless punishment, thought they had sufficient cause for rejoicing, and seemed to be content to rest their discoveries there. Further *progress* upon this subject was left for Mr. Ballou to make and promulgate, as by careful and unaided research he should come more fully to understand this most important subject.

"At this time," he writes in his manuscript before us, "fully realizing that the basis of all spiritual knowledge was the Bible, that blessed book was ever with me, and not one moment in which I was freed from necessary labor was occupied save in its perusal. I learned to love it, to consult its pages with reverence, and prayerfully, that I might rightly interpret its true meaning. I became very familiar with the various important passages, which frequently gave me great advantage in controversy, at that time, on points of faith; for it was the practice of those days to blindly give credence to such faith as was taught from the pulpit, and, leaving the minister to reason for the whole congregation, they themselves rarely consulted the holy text, in a spirit of inquiry, though they deemed themselves most devout and reasonable Christians. By individual and careful explorations, I found my Bible was able to teach me all I desired to know, and that, at the outset, I had been miserably deceived in my early impressions of God's word, by not examining and weighing the subject matter of divine revelation for myself. But such is the force of habit that those early impressions were at first constantly recurring to my

mind, and acting as stumbling blocks in the way of my onward progress."

It is often said that Rev. John Murray was an earlier preacher than the subject of this biography; that he is called the father of Universalism in America; and that Mr. Ballou received his opinions direct from him. But those persons who say thus, or entertain themselves such an idea, are mistaken; indeed, as often as this remark is made, it must always be by those who have thought little, and known less, of the history of Universalism. No one venerates the memory of Rev. John Murray more than the author of this memoir, who, indeed, out of respect for his Christian virtues and excellence, bears his name; but these records must be faithful in all respects. So far from Mr. Ballou's having obtained the opinions which formed the great and distinctive features of his doctrine from Murray, that venerated minister did not believe the creed of Universalists as taught by the subject of this biography, namely: *that the Bible affords no evidence of punishment after death*. Even at the time of Murray's death he held most tenaciously to his early belief; and he even preached the doctrine on the old Calvinistic principles, between which and the doctrine promulgated by Mr. Ballou there is a wide difference.

While in the town of Westfield, a serious accident occurred to Mr. Ballou, by which he nearly lost his life, being, by some accident, most fearfully scalded. After much suffering from the injury thus received, he perfectly recovered, and soon after

returned once more to Richmond, being not yet twenty-one years of age. He now first commenced the study of the English grammar, and attended for a period a school kept in the Quaker meeting-house in his native town.

Mr. Ballou says of this first attendance at school: – "It was a private school, the first one ever opened in the town, and was supported by a few young people with whom I united; and here I obtained the first instruction in English grammar. I now set myself to work in earnest to obtain learning. I studied night and day, slept little, and ate little."

At the close of this school, being actuated by an earnest desire to obtain knowledge, and realizing more than ever the immense advantage it bestowed, he determined, for a period, to devote his entire earnings to this end; and, in pursuance of this purpose, he immediately entered the Chesterfield (N. H.) Academy, where, by industry and incessant application, allowing himself but a brief period of time out of the twenty-four hours each day for sleep, in a very short space of time he acquired a good knowledge of the ordinary branches of an English education of those days. The tuition received by Mr. Ballou at this academy was the first worthy of mention that he had ever enjoyed, and was of vastly more importance to him than all he had been taught before, or had himself acquired, as it regarded the rudiments of his native language. Fortunately, the instructors employed were men of sound ability, and consequently from his studies here he realized most important and lasting benefit.

It was not alone the additional theoretical knowledge that he acquired here that we refer to as being of so much advantage to him; it was also that which he saw and realized while at this school. It was the spirit of emulation that was imparted to his disposition by observing others in their progress, as it regarded mental culture, and the acquirement of useful knowledge. His early associations had been among that class who had paid but little attention to mental cultivation. He had enjoyed but a limited opportunity thus far to judge of the incomparable power and importance of education; but now he realized it at a glance, and, determining to let no means within his power remain unexercised in the great purpose of obtaining knowledge and of cultivating intelligence, he gathered his golden harvest from every available source, and stored it in the cells of his brain.

We have heard him refer particularly to this period, as having devoted the hours of the night, as well as those of the day, to enable him to keep pace with more experienced minds and better cultivated intellects, and how apparently gratified the preceptor was to see him able and thorough in his recitations, knowing the strong disadvantages under which he labored. It was his good fortune to make the acquaintance of the teachers on good terms. They seemed prepossessed in his favor, and were exceedingly kind, and even assiduous, in rendering him every needed assistance in his studies. This was of unquestionable advantage to him, and made him, if possible, more attentive than he would otherwise have been as to studies and recitations, that

those who had been so kind to him might see that their labor was not thrown away. "I well remember," says Mr. Ballou, "the kindness and consideration exercised towards me by Professor Logan, the principal of the academy, who seemed resolved that my tuition should be of real benefit to me." And thus, indeed, it really proved, forming a foundation on which to rear a structure of useful knowledge, and the better to enable him to arrange and discipline his mind.

On leaving the academy, he obtained a certificate testifying to his sound moral character and ability, which document proved of considerable benefit to him afterwards in obtaining various situations as a teacher. Schools for the young were then kept but a short period at a time in New England, and thus the teacher had often occasion to change the field of his operations. Though thus engaged in the calling of a school-master, his mind, he has frequently told us, was at all times, when not immediately engaged with his pupils, occupied with the one great subject that had already taken such root in his heart, – that of religion. His Bible was ever in his hands or about his person for frequent reference, and his earnest and constant prayer to Heaven was that he might be able rightly to comprehend and analyze its doctrinal teachings.

He found his daily increasing knowledge of the Bible to be of great advantage to him, as he says himself, in argument with others, and also as it regarded properly weighing and arranging in his own mind its various parts, and the bearing each sustained

to the other. The early knowledge thus obtained of the holy text never left him, and was retained with most miraculous power and correctness through his entire life.

CHAPTER V.

COMMENCES TO PREACH

While Mr. Ballou was yet but twenty years of age, he made one or two unsuccessful attempts to preach a regular discourse. That is, he delivered sermons once or twice at the period referred to, before small assemblies of his personal friends and relations. But so far from satisfying himself in relation to his ability for public speaking, he was quite disheartened by the result that attended these his first efforts. Yet, by the constant solicitations of those who were curious to hear him discourse upon the topic of his peculiar views, he continued to speak, despite of the advice of his immediate friends and relations, until he not only soon satisfied himself as to his abilities, but also received the cordial approval of a large number of those who would, at the outset, have discouraged him entirely.

In relation to this period of his life, Mr. Ballou gives us his own words, and to the point. But the reader will please to mark that when he speaks at this period of Universalists, he refers to those who thus called themselves, but who would, in these days, be more properly denominated Restorationists. The correctness of this statement will at once be seen from the fact of his saying that he met John Murray, etc., at the first *Universalist* convention which he ever attended, while those who are acquainted with that

honored teacher's tenets of faith are aware, as we have already stated in these pages, that he lived and died solemnly believing in a state of future suffering or punishment; and more latterly during his life he sustained many controversies with Mr. Ballou on this very subject.

"In September of the year preceding my beginning to preach," says Mr. Ballou, "I went to Oxford with my brother David, to attend the first Universalist convention I had ever met with. Here I saw John Murray for the first time, and George Richards, and some other public preachers. The next summer after I was twenty years old, I labored with my brother on his farm, and late in the fall made my first attempt to preach. This was on an evening, and at the house of Deacon Thayer, in Richmond. Mr. Thayer had been a deacon in the Baptist church, but had become a Universalist, and still retained his office with the last-named denomination. My brother and Rev. Caleb Rich were present to hear my first attempt to preach; and, according to what I could learn, they had their doubts whether I had a talent for such labor, but were not without some hope. The second time I attempted to preach was in the town of Brattleboro', Vt., where my brother preached in the daytime, and I undertook to speak in the evening, being overpersuaded to do so; but this attempt was a failure, and I was greatly mortified, and thought, for a time, that I would not engage in a work for which I was not competent. However, it was not long before I became encouraged to try again, after which I met with no remarkable failure to produce discouragement."

The comparative failure of Mr. Ballou's earliest attempts at public speaking, although soon afterwards followed by complete success, is not at all surprising. It is exceedingly rare to find the first efforts of orators satisfactory to themselves and to their friends. The first attempt of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the most brilliant orator of his time, – if, perhaps, we except Burke, who was, however, more distinguished by the eloquence of his diction, – was a complete and decided failure. But, knowing himself, he declared emphatically that "it was in him, and must come out." When General, then Colonel, Washington rose to respond to a complimentary address of the legislature of his native colony, he found it impossible to express himself; and the first efforts of the illustrious and lamented Henry Clay gave no promise of his future eminence. It would be easy to multiply illustrations of the fact that it is only step by step that fame and honor are attained. No one springs at a bound to the summit of his reputation and usefulness. It is only shallow pretenders who sometimes shine with a false lustre at the outset of their career, soon to sink into utter insignificance. But the true man, the man of sterling genius and worth, conscious of a high mission, and confiding in Providence for the energy and inspiration necessary to fulfil it, is not daunted with the obstacles that present themselves at the outset of his career. They are regarded as trials and tests as to his adaptedness to the purpose for which he is created. From every rebuff he acquires new strength; he puts forth redoubled energy, until at last he triumphs

over every impediment, and stands forth in the full energy of his being.

Had not Mr. Ballou been prompted by such a spirit as this, had he not been possessed of an extraordinary vigor of character, for which he was ever remarkable, he would hardly have persevered in his attempts to preach under these discouraging circumstances. It will be remembered that he did not sit down and compose a discourse which he afterwards read to his audience; this is comparatively an easy task. He spoke extemporaneously then, as he ever did afterwards. In subsequent years he was frequently called upon for manuscript copies of his discourses for publication. But the sermons were not written until after they had been delivered; and it was not his practice to put on paper even the heads of his discourse to take into the desk with him for reference in delivery. Trusting entirely to his powerfully retentive memory, the arrangement of his sermons was as methodical and correct as though penned in the seclusion of his study. We have heard some persons, more nice than wise, speak of his extemporaneous delivery as an objection, and find fault because he did not write his discourses, and thus deliver them from his notes in the pulpit. We have a word to say in relation to this subject, since it has been thus referred to.

To speak extempore and at the same time to speak well and to the purpose, to arrange certain points and arguments mentally with nice precision, so as to deliver them with fluency and effect, must require a strong and healthy intellect, a powerful

and original mind. But a man with an ordinary degree of mental cultivation, who cannot write a discourse and read it afterward, must be singularly deficient in his intellectual capacity. It is impossible for an audience to feel so deep an interest in the service as that which is felt in listening to the spontaneous outbursts of a warm and ardent mind while it is engaged upon the holy theme. The speaker must invariably grow enthusiastic in so glorious a cause as he advocates, and his audience necessarily partake of his feelings. But when there is any particular degree of spirit or animation evinced by one who is reading his discourse *verbatim et literatim*, it is of necessity a preconcerted exhibition, and as such must fail of its effect with the majority. It may be said that no man can lay out so well his matter, nor give so good and sound an argument, spontaneously, as when he commits his ideas to paper. This, as a general thing, must be conceded, for there are comparatively few intellects sufficiently powerful to adopt the opposite course.

The advantages of extemporaneous speaking are doubtless many. It enables the individual to place himself in closer contact with the feelings of his audience, giving him the power to take advantage of any bright thought that unexpected impulse may impart. An experienced commander arranges the general plan of an engagement before going into battle, but he can do no more, for circumstances must guide him in the conflict. He must improve the opportunity to throw forward his forces just at the right moment, not too soon nor too late, as such an indiscretion

might change the fortunes of the day, and lose the battle to him who would else have won it. So with the preacher; he must watch the inner man of his hearers, and, as he gains ground in the heart, follow up his influence by well-sustained argument, and strengthen his position by proper means made available at the appropriate moment, – neither too lightly nor yet with too much force, but be guided safely by the strength of the position he already holds in the minds of his audience.

Such things cannot be correctly anticipated, and laid down beforehand, by comma and period, in the study. Mr. Ballou's arguments were arranged with the utmost precision, his reasoning followed in the most logical array, and all the while he was talking to the people in the most unconcerned and familiar manner, as though each respective member of his congregation was sitting by his own fireside and the preacher had happened in. This is the mode of preaching which is effectual, and all the flowers of rhetoric may seek in vain to attain a like influence over the hearts and sympathies of an auditory. The latter mode of preaching may please, but the former will convince; the first will make worshippers, the last admirers. Thinks the reader that the simple fishermen of Galilee – yet the chosen of God – sought by the vain and gaudy ornaments of elegant delivery and studied eloquence to please the people? No! They preached the holy word in all meekness, striving to exalt not themselves, but rather the name of him who had sent them.

Mr. Ballou says, relative to the period when he commenced to

preach: – "Mr. Logan, the preceptor, gave me a certificate when I left the Chesterfield Academy, which was sufficient to enable me to get a school in Bellingham, Mass. Here I taught school during the other days of the week, and preached on the Sabbath. When I first engaged in preaching, it was not with the most distant expectation that I should support myself by the ministry; but I thought I could keep school some, and labor some with my hands, and live with but a little income. From Bellingham I went to the town of Foster, R. I., where my father formerly lived, and there my father taught a large school and had good compensation; and here also on the Sabbath I preached in the school-house where I taught. From this place I went to Scituate, in R. I., where I preached and taught school. My meetings grew very large, and I was called on to go to different places, – to Smithfield, Providence, Pawtucket, etc. After I had spent about two years in keeping school and preaching, I found that I had used up all my earnings, had laid up nothing, except that I had more costly clothing than when I first began. And now, at the age of twenty-four, I was so much called on to preach that I gave up keeping school, and devoted my time to the ministry, receiving now and then some compensation for my services."

Mr. Ballou's life as a public minister may be said to have commenced at the age of twenty. From that time, as it became known that he preached the doctrine which was deemed by nearly all to be such a heresy, there were numerous invitations, as he shows us above, pouring in upon him from all quarters,

to come and address the people concerning the faith he had espoused. His labors were by no means confined to Rhode Island, but he preached in the neighborhood of Richmond, and in various parts of Vermont and Massachusetts, improving every moment of leisure time in the most careful study of the Scriptures. He no longer preached on the Sabbath only, but also on nearly every consecutive evening of the week. It was easy to gather an audience, anxious and ready to listen to the new and most happy doctrine that the preacher taught, and even at this early period of his ministerial career he began to address those spontaneous mass assemblies that in after years always gathered from all directions to listen to him whenever he appeared. Entirely forgetting himself, and with but one great object in view, that of preaching God's impartial grace, and of convincing all who would listen to him of the glorious truths of Universalism, he counted not the hours of mental labor which now increased upon him, but labored hard and willingly with his hands to clothe himself, receiving but a mere trifle for his professional labors. Pay, at this period, he never demanded, and very rarely expected; he was fully contented with the inward recompense which he realized.

"At this period of my life," says Mr. Ballou, "my health was very indifferent. I had most of the time a severe pain in the pit of my stomach, and my appetite was far from being good, and so debilitated was I in strength that I have even been obliged to sit while I preached. It became necessary for me to procure a vehicle

to journey in, being too weak to ride on horseback; however, by care and good advice, I gradually recruited. My travelling for that period was extensive, from Cape Ann east, to the Connecticut River west, to Richmond north, and New London and Hartford south. All my Sabbaths were employed, and many lectures were attended during each week. I preached in meeting-houses when they could be obtained, sometimes in school-houses, sometimes in barns, and not very seldom in groves and orchards, and often in private houses.

"To the people, the doctrine I preached was new, and the opposition lacked not for bitterness; and such was my condition that I was constantly in conflict, and never allowed to put off my armor to rest, day or night. All manner of evil reports concerning me were invented, and the worst of slander circulated, all tending to make me regardless of what my enemies said. My answer to all this slander was, while they speak thus falsely of me, I am in no danger; if I am injured I shall do that myself."

Theology was a subject of most sombre hue at this period in New England. Calvinism had twined its choking fibres so closely about the sacred tree, that its branches drooped, and its leaves withered in the sunshine of truth. The doctrines taught from the pulpit, while they were listened to as a duty, were yet repulsive to the heart of the hearer, and abhorrent to his very soul. The principle of divine love was clouded wholly from sight by the dark mass of murky error that enshrouded all scripture teachings. The duties of man to his Maker and to himself were held forth

under fearful threats, as a penalty for disobedience, but the idea that in the performance of our duty real happiness is alone to be found, while sin most surely brings its own punishment, was never publicly advanced. Sinfulness, aside from the liabilities of eternity, was not held up to be avoided, but rather acknowledged to be pleasant and desirable, while those who trod the paths of righteousness were taught to consider themselves as self-sacrificing martyrs, and told to look for their reward in eternity. It was these obvious inconsistencies that at first challenged the attention of the subject of this memoir. And when he stood up and boldly exposed these palpable errors, when he preached *love* while others preached *wrath* to the people, it is not singular that those who were so diametrically opposed to him in faith should be ready to believe and propagate any stories that might reflect upon his character, and thus detract from his influence as exercised upon those who so eagerly listened to him, and in whose hearts, in the very nature of things, he was sure of an answering and approving sentiment.

It is a matter of regret that Mr. Ballou has left no record of his journeyings and labors during this important period of his clerical career, as such a narrative would have been most deeply interesting to his family and friends. The amount of labor he performed must have been prodigious, and fully accounts for the enfeebled bodily condition to which he alludes. Every fibre of his intellectual frame must have been constantly in a state of extreme tension; for his was not the easy task of preaching

on the Sabbath a written discourse which he had taken a whole week to prepare, but, as we have said, he was called upon almost daily to address large audiences and promiscuous assemblies. Nor was his the pleasant duty of the navigator who follows the course of the stream and the tide. He was a pioneer; he preached a new doctrine; and, as he says, "the opposition lacked not for bitterness." It is not surely an exaggeration to declare that Universalism in those days was popularly regarded with as much hostility as Infidelity itself is now. Hence, in addition to the severe fatigue of travel, the necessity of finding constantly new arguments and new illustrations, to sway the minds of constantly changing auditors, he had to battle valiantly, like a soldier of Christ, against the most vigorous and determined opposition.

In this condition, how mentally and physically trying must have been his incessant labors in his Master's vineyard! Neither by night nor by day could he for a moment lay aside his armor. Standing alone, there was no respite to his exertions. Later in life he beheld a host of able followers ready to relieve him of a portion of his duties. His doctrine was no longer the theme of obloquy and outrage. He outlived calumny and detraction. But it will be seen that even in extreme old age he did not spare himself; he did not suffer sloth to creep upon his spirit, nor rust to gather on his armor. He was still the favored champion of his cause, and ever ready to minister to the spiritual wants of his brethren in the faith.

With the close of his itinerant labors, we now come to another

important and interesting epoch in his life.

CHAPTER VI.

BECOMES A SETTLED MINISTER

The first place in which Mr. Ballou engaged permanently as a settled minister was in the town of Dana, Mass., in 1794-5. The society here, not feeling able to pay for an engagement which should occupy him the whole time, engaged him for a portion, leaving him to supply the societies in Oxford and Charlton, Mass., also, a portion of the time. Having now become located, and his residence known, large numbers of people from a distance gathered to hear him, not only on the Sabbath, but frequently for several consecutive days of the week besides. Many there were who held his doctrine to be such damning heresy that they counted it a sin even to listen to it; while others of his religious opponents, holding that "there is no error so crooked but it hath in it some lines of truth," came and listened, and the seed not unfrequently fell into good soil, bringing forth a hundred fold.

"Often was I greeted at this time," says Mr. Ballou, "by people who would say, 'Sir, I heard you preach a sermon, a few weeks since, from such a text,' naming it, 'and I have been uneasy and anxious in my mind ever since. If your doctrine is true, I must understand and believe it. But, alas! I fear it is too good to be true; it is so different from what I have been brought up to believe that

I cannot divest my mind of early prejudices sufficiently to receive it, though Heaven knows how gladly I could do so.' Then the individual would quote some passages of scripture which seemed to him to be insuperable objections to the doctrine I professed, and I would do all in my power to explain these passages to his mind, in the way I had myself already learned to interpret them. Usually, with the blessing of Divine Providence, I was successful, at least in a large degree, and on the following Sabbath I was pretty sure to find the honest seeker after truth among my congregation, and the following Sabbath he would be there again, attentively listening to the word, until, finally, he came forth and openly espoused the blessed doctrine of God's impartial grace. Thus encouraged with the growth of the seed that I strewed by the way-side, my task was a grateful one to my soul, and I was constantly gladdened by the visible fruits of my efforts in disenthraling men's minds of the dogmas and blind creeds that early prejudice and the schools had inculcated."

Let it be borne in mind that at this period he was preaching Universalism on the principle of the final restoration of the whole human family, not having satisfied himself yet that there would be no punishment in a future state of existence, or, indeed, ever thought upon this subject to any great extent. Owing to the very trifling amount of his remuneration from the society in Dana, while he resided there, besides tilling a small portion of land, he was obliged to keep school during the week, and this engagement was often broken into for lecture purposes. His

keeping and teaching school was a benefit to him beyond the pecuniary consideration he received, inasmuch as it familiarized him with many branches of an English education which he would perhaps otherwise never have acquired, or at least not nearly so thoroughly as he did by this means.

Uninfluenced by the sneers of his opposers, and the poor remuneration he received for the preaching of his belief, he never for one moment wavered in a steadfast purpose, even at this early period, to preach Christ and him crucified, and the unsearchable riches of God's goodness. In this connection we are reminded of the remarks of the editor of the *New Covenant*, Chicago, Ill., who, in his obituary notice of the decease of Mr. Ballou, says:—

"But now we are called to mourn the departure of one who, when our cause had scarcely a name to live, — when it was the subject of the sneer of the bigot, as well as of the profane curse of the irreligious, and even its warmest friends scarcely dared to hope for its resurrection to honor and respect, — bent the energy of a giant mind to a life-long defence and promulgation of the truth, — by his unanswerable arguments turned the sneer of bigotry into a smile of hope, and the curses of the profane into blessings, — of one who has done more in this age for the liberalizing of religious sentiment than all his contemporaries combined. Strong in the faith he preached, and steadfastly believing it must at last triumph, from early youth to mature old age he has kept on his armor and fought the good fight of faith, and death even found him at his post as a faithful sentinel, and in

the midnight hour he could answer, 'All is well!'"

At the age of twenty-five, and while resident in the town of Dana, he became acquainted with the family of Stephen Washburn, in the town of Williamsburg, Mass., and, after an intimate acquaintance of about a year, he married their youngest daughter, Ruth Washburn, who was some eight years younger than himself. His wife, like her husband, had been brought up to habits of industry and economy; she proved a kind, constant, and devoted help-mate through his entire life, sharing with him every joy and every burthen, and, by the influence of a naturally strong and well balanced mind, a cheerful and gentle disposition, exercising a most goodly influence upon his life and labors. She became the careful and prudent mother of a large family, nine of whom lived to rear families themselves during the life of their parents. Through their whole lives there was a remarkable oneness of feeling, and a depth of affection evinced by each for the other, that years served only to increase, and old age to cement the more closely. But of this matter we may yet speak more fully.

Mr. Ballou resided in the town of Dana for about seven years, devoting every spare hour to careful study of the Scriptures, systematizing his time by a careful division of the hours of the day, and permitting himself but a very brief portion of time for sleep.

When we say that he devoted his time so assiduously to study, we do not mean that he occupied himself in the perusal of books

alone. He *thought* much, communed with himself alone, and even at that period accustomed himself to a degree of inward or mental communion with himself, that would seem to exclude the world about him, for the time being, from his sense of seeing or hearing. This was more observable in later years, when he often sat long in his study thus, sometimes with his eyes closed, sometimes with their pupils directed to the floor or the ceiling of the room, his lips moving, and at last, having seemingly weighed well some important matter, he would rouse again as if from a trance, and look about him with apparent satisfaction at the result he seemed to have accomplished. Sometimes these moments were followed by the use of the pen for records in his note-book of texts and sermon heads, sometimes by a reference to the Scriptures, and sometimes by a walk in the open air; then his lips would be seen to move, and he would be quite oblivious to all outward circumstances. He studied thus, carefully and deeply. At times he would walk in the fields or the woods while thus occupied; and the family never disturbed him by any remarks, or by calling his attention, while he was thus mentally absorbed. In another part of this biography, reference will be found concerning this peculiarity, as exhibited at a later period of his life, and observed by one who was an inmate of his family, and a student of divinity with him. The family were accustomed to his mood in these matters, but it usually affected a stranger, or one not familiar with him, in quite an impressive and solemn manner; it seemed so much as though he was communing with

unseen spirits, and a power that was invisible to those about him or to himself, save through the powers of his mental vision.

It would seem that the little bodily rest which he allowed himself at this period must have induced physical debility; and yet it did not appear to do so. In travelling, a large portion of his short journeyings were made in the evening; sometimes at midnight even, and often before the break of day, in order to fulfil necessary appointments without encroaching upon his arrangements at home. When stopping for his horse to take rest and food, himself much fatigued, he would take his watch from his pocket, and, laying it upon a table near some place where he could find a recumbent position, he would carefully mark the time, and say distinctly to himself, "I will sleep now for just one hour, when I must awake and go on." Singular as this may seem, he has told us that he never failed to awake at the expiration of the hour, and, much refreshed, he would mount his horse and press on to fill some professional engagement, perhaps twenty or thirty miles from the stopping-place. At other times, while his horse was eating, he would deliver a sermon, and, having completed it, would, without stopping for any physical refreshment for himself, start off once more on his mission.

"In searching the Scriptures," he says, "to enable myself to preach as the divine oracles taught, I became satisfied that those who were then called Universalists had founded their doctrine on wrong principles, as well as other denominations. The doctrine of man's native depravity, of original sin, of the deserts of

eternal misery, of the vicarious sufferings of Christ, by which he endured, in man's stead, the divine penalty of God's law, whereby man could escape the punishment due to his sins, was believed by those who called themselves Universalists, as well as by Calvinists: also, the doctrine of the Trinity, holding that Christ is equal to God, or, in other words, is God, being the second person in the holy Trinity. All these notions, as it appeared to me, were essential errors, constituting a mass of confusion. I soon renounced all these views, and preached only God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. All my brethren in the ministry, and all our friends, stood on the old platform, and I found that I had to contend with Universalists as well as with partialists. But I went to my work in earnest, laboring, with all my skill and with all my limited talents, to convince my brethren in the ministry, and all who heard me preach, that the doctrines of the Trinity, of depravity, of eternal penalty, etc., were neither the doctrines of the Scriptures nor of reason. The opposition to my sentiments fast gave way among Universalists, though even among them I met with as bitter opposition, in some instances, as from other denominations. The first time I preached in Bro. Murray's church, in Boston, was during his absence in Philadelphia, and I then came out fully with my Unitarian views, which produced great disturbance. Some were violent in their opposition, while others, and not a few, fell in with my manner of explaining the Scriptures. I was then twenty-eight years of age."

Mr. Ballou says that his declaring his views on this occasion was the cause of "great disturbance." This disturbance was so earnest that some few of the audience, more bitter than the rest, rose in their seats and declared that the sentiments which had been uttered were not in accordance with Mr. Murray's views, etc. Whereupon Mr. Ballou simply informed them that he had been invited, without solicitation on his own part, to preach in that desk; that he came there to preach no one's convictions but his own; that he never had consulted, and never should consult, the taste of his audience as to the doctrine he preached to them; but that he should proclaim the truth, as, by the help of Heaven, he had been enabled to learn it from the Bible, and the truth only!

On the subsequent day Mr. Ballou was formally waited upon by a committee from the Society, who thanked him for the discourse, and a majority coincided also in his peculiar views.

The conclusions as to doctrine at which he arrived were based upon severe study and profound reflection; and when we consider the age at which he had elaborated and enunciated a creed of such vast importance, a creed so entirely in advance of his contemporaries, we cannot fail to be most forcibly impressed with the extraordinary originality and remarkable precocity of his intellect. Such early vigor and maturity would have been astonishing in one who had enjoyed all the advantages of early training, all the aids afforded by the best theological institutions and instructors; but in one who had passed through so many hardships, overcome so many difficulties, and was

so emphatically self-taught and self-made, they can only be regarded as evidences of the highest genius, and the immediate favorable interposition of Divine Providence.

His unshaken faith and inflexibility of conviction are evinced by the fact that he stood firm, not only against the opposing sects, but against the disciples of the improved doctrine which he first preached. It requires not a little energy to confront declared foes; but to contend with friends, to risk the loss of their favor and support, is a trial which few have the boldness to sustain. But the subject of this biography knew not what temporizing meant; his whole life, his whole intellect, all his energies, were devoted to the discovery of truth, and the enunciation of the truth he discovered. Had he stood entirely alone, without one single friend, without one single proselyte, he would have spoken as he did, boldly, earnestly, candidly, the apostle and defender of his faith. The inspiration of his mission was from on high; neither applause nor opposition changed his views, or in the least affected his serene and constant equanimity.

The patient and unruffled manner in which he always held a controversy has been often remarked of him; himself the mark for all manner of personalities and low reflections, he never descended to such a mode of warfare, being fully content in the justice and power of his cause, and considering that as more than equal to low cunning, or, indeed, any trickery of those who opposed him so bitterly. Flattery would have been equally powerless in effect upon him, for he looked not to man

for approval, but to his own conscience and his God. Love of applause is a most natural trait in our dispositions. The hero of a hundred battles feels his heart glow afresh at the grateful meed of praise; the politician reads the glowing accounts of his own eloquence with secret gratification; and who is there so humble that is not susceptible of flattery, who so high in worldly honors that they do not acknowledge the potency of applause? And yet we shall be sustained in the remark by all who knew the subject of these memoirs intimately, when we say, that neither ridicule nor flattery moved him in the least, the single purpose of his life being his Master's business; and he ever acknowledged himself, that he really endeavored to be (and beyond which he aspired not) the servant of all men. Few persons, with his power over the masses, and holding the position that was universally accorded to him, but that would have often brought themselves as *individuals*, with their *personal* interests and desires, before the public; self-aggrandizement will almost always discover itself more or less in prominent public men. But he knew no such incentive; he had one grand object in view, one which he never lost sight of, and which was more than paramount to everything else combined; – it was to inculcate the religion of God's impartial goodness and eternal grace.

In the thirtieth year of his age, he was induced to accept of the invitation of the towns of Woodstock, Hartland, Bethel, and Barnard, Vt., making the latter place his home. While resident here he devoted himself to ardent and constant study, and in

the year 1804 produced his "*Notes on the Parables*," one of the most popular and useful books, even to the present day, in the Universalist library. It has passed through numerous large editions, and a new one, at this present writing, is about to be put to press. It is a book containing nearly the same amount of matter as the present memoir in the reader's hand. This book was written and published at a time when Mr. Ballou's health was really suffering from the effects of his unremitting labors, both mental and physical.

"My health," he says, "in those years which I passed in Vermont, was generally very good. I had some time, previous to removing from Dana, been gaining health and growing more corpulent, so that my uniform weight for several years was about two hundred pounds." But at the time when he wrote the "*Notes*," for a considerable period he had been over-tasked, and so much so as to materially affect his health. The roads about the country were of a very poor character, and being unable to use a vehicle on many of the routes over which he passed, he was frequently obliged to accomplish his journeys on horseback, which was a severe draft upon his strength. In his first preface to the edition of *Notes on the Parables*, the author thus refers to the subject of the book: —

"In my travels through the country in discharge of duties enjoined by the ministry of the Saviour of sinners, I have met with more opposition to the gospel preached to Abraham from false notions of the parables of the New Testament, than

from any other source. Often, after travelling many miles and preaching *several* sermons in a day, I have found it necessary to explain various parables to some inquiring hearer, when my strength seemed almost exhausted. At such times I have thought a volume, such as the reader has in hand, might save me much labor, and I have often said to myself, If God will give me a few weeks' leisure, I will, with his assistance, employ them in writing 'Notes on the Parables.' This favor has at length been granted, though it was by depriving me of that degree of health that was necessary to the performance of the journeys which I had already appointed, yet preserving so much as to render me composed in my study."

This is undoubtedly one of the most valuable books in the Universalist library; particularly valuable from the fact of its treating, in the clearest and most forcible manner, upon those peculiar doctrinal points which, more than all others, have been the theme of contention among professed Christians. At the time when Mr. Ballou published this work, his mind was not fully made up as to the subject of punishment after death; but the matter had already resolved itself to this in his mind; that if any suffer in the future state it would be because they would be sinful there. It was not long subsequent, however, that he came to the full knowledge and conviction that the doctrine of future punishment was nowhere taught in the Bible, and this creed he thenceforth ever most assiduously preached on all occasions.

In his preface to the fifth edition the author says: – "On

account of so many of the parables being used by believers in endless punishment to support and enforce that sentiment, the author of the Notes was induced to study them with special reference to the question whether they might not, with more propriety, be applied in a different manner. Of this fact he became fully satisfied; even as much so as he is now. But, though he entertained no scruples on that point, he was not so happy as to be fully satisfied, in every case, as to the true intent of the parable. In this situation he cautiously endeavored not to apply any parable to a subject which was not found to be embraced in the system of truth which the Scriptures clearly and evidently support. Little harm is done by applying a parable to a subject to which it was not intended by the author to apply, provided the subject to which it is misapplied be a truth clearly supported by either Scripture or man's experience; but to misconstrue any passage of the divine testimony so as to give support to what is not true, is unquestionably no small damage; and if the error be of magnitude, whereby our Heavenly Father is represented in an unlovely character, or our confidence in his goodness diminished, such misconstruction is not only a reprehensible violence on the Scriptures, but a dishonor to their divine Author. I am persuaded that a just knowledge of the parables is almost indispensably necessary to a knowledge of the doctrine preached by Christ, as much of his public communication was in this way. It is in the parables of Christ that we learn the nature of the two dispensations or covenants; the situation of man by reason of

sin; the character of the Saviour as the seeker and savior of that which was lost; the power of the gospel as a sovereign remedy for the moral maladies of man, and its divine efficacy in reconciling and assimilating the sinner to God. It is by the parables that we learn the unprofitableness of legal righteousness in point of justification to eternal life; the absolute necessity of becoming new creatures, in order to enter the kingdom of God; the true character of the Saviour as the Lord our Righteousness, and his divine power to make all things new."

The "*Notes on the Parables*" have unquestionably led thousands of minds to valuable improvement in the knowledge of the Scriptures, and converted many a longing soul to the precious and joyful belief of universal salvation. At the time when these Notes were written, the light which has now become so general and evident to nearly every candid seeker after truth, – the true light of the gospel of Christ, – seemed to be but just dawning; the warm and genial sun of the true faith but faintly tinged the east; but ere long it rose steadily and majestically, until it radiated its noon-day warmth, in meridian splendor and beauty. We should remember that the author of the "Notes" enjoyed the use of no other book than the Bible in forming and promulgating his own opinions, which have since become the general belief of the Universalist order. The book is especially lucid and original in its style, and bears in its pages constant evidence of deep and careful research.

In an excellent book lately issued by the publisher of this

biography, entitled a Memoir of Rev. S. R. Smith, written by Rev. Thomas J. Sawyer, D. D., of Clinton, N. Y., we find the following incident related, referring to this period of Mr. Ballou's life. It is from the pen of the subject of the memoir, Rev. Stephen R. Smith, concerning whose Christian excellence too much cannot be said.

"By what means the intelligence that Hosea Ballou would preach on the following Sunday, in a place fifteen miles distant, could have been conveyed to a very young man, who did not then know a single Universalist in the world, is not remembered. He went, however, and heard a discourse in the morning, from Zech. 6:13; and, for the first time in his life, felt that he had listened to a sermon that neither involved an absurdity nor a contradiction. The congregation was not large, and occupied a school-house in the present city of Utica, then a meagre and muddy village. A larger congregation was anticipated in the afternoon, and arrangements were made for the service in the open air, under some trees, on the bank of the Mohawk river. There, in due time, a large auditory assembled, and listened to one of Mr. Ballou's best discourses, from Deut. 33: part of the 16th with the 17th verse. It was a glorious day, early in June. The silence of Sunday was around us; the bright blue heavens above us, partly veiled by the branches of a few scattering oaks; the clear, quiet river at our side; the ruddy and healthy preacher, in all the vigor of manhood, before us, and pleading the cause of God and humanity with a group of most attentive hearers.

Such a scene is not to be forgotten; and, altogether, it was one, in every respect, calculated to make the most lasting impression. And such certainly were its effects upon the mind of the writer. For, while it left him without any pretension to the knowledge or belief of Universalism, as a system of religious truth, it certainly satisfied him that it was consistent with itself, and with all that we see and know of the Deity and his moral government. It is scarcely to be doubted that similar impressions were made on many persons in that congregation."

While resident in Barnard, he wrote also his "*Treatise on Atonement*." This book, though written so many years since, is still as popular as when first issued from the press, and has passed, like the "Notes," through several large editions. It is contained in a volume of between two and three hundred pages, and is justly esteemed as one of the soundest productions that has ever emanated from the author's pen, and we may, perhaps, add without apparent arrogance, one of the most thoroughly philosophical and argumentative works of the age. In the Modern History of Universalism, the author, in speaking of the change of opinion generally from the ideas preached by John Murray, Winchester, and other early ministers, says that the belief in the Trinity, atonement, and kindred notions, was discarded through the influence of this book.

"The labors of Hosea Ballou, of this city," says the author, "may be regarded as one of the principal means of the change. In the '*Treatise on Atonement*,' he has treated the subject at

length, maintaining the subordination of the Son to the Father, the eternal and impartial love of God to all creatures, and holding forth the death of Christ not as the cause, but as the effect of this eternal principle of the divine nature. The very wide circulation of this work evinces the high estimation in which it has been held by the American Universalists."

We subjoin also the following notice of the "Treatise," because we think it a most truthful critique relative to the book, which we desire to have the readers of this biography to understand. In this review, which appeared not long since in the Evangelical Magazine, the editor says: —

"The decided manner in which the doctrine of vicarious atonement is rejected, the prominence given to the belief that Jesus was a dependent being, dependent like ourselves on a common Father and God, and that he was sent to preach the truth and illustrate its requirements, and by his exclusive influence to reconcile man to his Maker, were subjects so new, so startling, that for a time the work appears not to have been very well received. But the important object was attained. The public attention, and especially that of Universalists, was drawn to the consideration of these fundamental and momentous doctrines. The author's views were very generally adopted by the order, and the book obtained unbounded popularity. It deserves this distinction, for it doubtless wrought the great revolution that transformed Universalism from the Unitarian hypothesis, with all its concomitants, into the simple and intelligible system formed

in the doctrine of the indivisible oneness of God. It is, perhaps, impossible to estimate the influence which this work has had upon the so-called Unitarian controversy in New England. But this much is quite certain, the 'Treatise' was one of the earliest publications that openly and distinctly rejected the doctrine of the Trinity, and manfully met the prevailing prejudices respecting that subject. But aside from these matters, there is not another book in the country, on the same subject, that has been read by half the number of persons, or wrought conviction of the truth of the doctrine of the Divine unity in one half so many minds, as this '*Treatise on Atonement*.'

These notices, as we have just intimated, are introduced here to give the reader, who may not be otherwise acquainted with the "Treatise," a correct and clear idea of the work. Though among the earliest of Mr. Ballou's publications, this book is far from being deficient in any point, either as to sound logical reasoning, or in force and earnestness of style. Simple, yet profound, it is within the capacity of the humblest to comprehend and fully understand, while it cannot fail to challenge the admiration of the scholar and philosopher. It is written in the plain, straightforward manner which so distinguished his after productions, and which never failed to carry conviction with it. "The 'Treatise' has been pronounced by one of the strongest minds of the age," says the publisher of the sixth edition, "to be one of the soundest arguments in the English language." Were the author's reputation to rest solely upon this work, we should feel satisfied at the

manner in which his memory must be handed down to posterity.

In his preface to the first edition of the book, he says: — "Many circumstances might be mentioned, which, in their associations, have induced me to write and publish the following treatise; but I can say with propriety, that the principal object was that in which I always find the greatest happiness, namely, to do what I find most necessary in order to render myself useful to mankind."

At the time of the publication of this "Treatise," Mr. Ballou had by no means arrived at such a degree of understanding and belief upon the subject of the Scriptures as was the case in after years, and, with wise fore-thought, he thus speaks his mind in the preface to the first edition: —

"I have often been solicited to write and publish my general views on the gospel, but have commonly observed to my friends that it might be attended with disagreeable consequences, as it is impossible to determine whether the ideas we entertain at the present time are agreeable to those which we shall be under the necessity of adopting after we have had more experience; and knowing, to my satisfaction, that authors are very apt to feel such an attachment to sentiments which have been openly avowed to the world, that their prejudice frequently obstructs their further acquisition in the knowledge of the truth, and even in cases of conviction their own self-importance will keep them from acknowledging their mistake."

Though he was thus cautious (and what judgment, prudence, and cool reasoning are evinced in this paragraph), the only

change that experience did bring about, in the author's mind, was, that he became even more fully convinced, as the experience of years ripened the harvest of his wisdom, of the truths of his former belief, and made still further *progress* (a word that he loved and lived up to), in addition to certain points that are but lightly touched upon in the work.

The following letter, relating to this and other works, was elicited by the presentation to Mr. Ballou of a set, in a new and uniform edition with some of his subsequent publications; the constant call for these books, even after several large editions had been exhausted, and a long period of years had elapsed since their first being issued, requiring this fresh publication of them. Mr. Ballou having parted with the copyright at the time of publication, they were of course in the hands of the trade. This letter is introduced here as illustrative of the humble estimate he put upon his own important labors and discoveries, and is also in style very like him. It bears date 1844, and was written, consequently, when he was seventy-three years of age. It was addressed to the editor of the Trumpet, and appeared in the editorial columns of that paper.

"Br. Whittemore: Please permit me to acknowledge with gratitude a favor I have received from Br. Abel Tompkins, consisting of four volumes of my writings: my Notes on the Parables of the New Testament; my Treatise on Atonement; my course of Lecture Sermons, and my Select Sermons. It gives me much pleasure to learn that these

works have been so favorably regarded by the denomination with which I have had the happiness to hold an unbroken and uninterrupted connection for more than half a century, as to warrant this new edition. The improved style in which these volumes now appear cannot fail to give entire satisfaction to all who have a good taste, and will doubtless facilitate their sale.

"When, more than forty years ago, I wrote my 'Notes' and 'Treatise,' I had never seen any work in defence of the doctrine of the Divine unity, and the dependency of the Son upon the Father. When this circumstance is duly considered, the reader will be satisfied that the writer must have exerted the limited powers of his mind to their utmost capacity. This is all the credit he claims.

"Hosea Ballou."

Mr. Ballou has long been allowed the credit, which is also most justly due to him, of having been the first Unitarian writer in this country; for, as he says above, he had never seen any book in defence of the doctrine of the Divine unity when he wrote in favor of those principles in the works referred to. Another evidence of the fact is, that Mr. Ballou's sentiments at that time were considered most strange and novel by all.

"In this Treatise," says Rev. Thomas Whittemore, "Mr. Ballou took the ground that God was never unreconciled to man; that man was the party who needed reconciliation, for God is love from eternity to eternity, and that God's love to sinners was the cause of Christ's being sent by the Father to redeem them. He

held that Christ was not God himself, but the Son of God; a distinct being from the Father, – a *created* being; – a doctrine which he had believed and preached for ten years, having commenced to preach it as early as 1795. He must therefore be regarded as the earliest defender of Unitarianism the country has produced."

Mr. Ballou says, relative to the doctrine of the Trinity: – "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 these old doctrines were, by any means, rendered the subject 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."

The reader will at once be prepared to admit that Mr. Ballou must have expended much time and labor in the research and study of the Scriptures, necessary to enable him to write and publish these works, in a cause, and upon a theme, wherein he was a pioneer. He steered his barque into new waters, and was obliged himself to stand ever with the "lead" in his hand, to ascertain the true soundings, and keep thus in the narrow channel of truth. Concerning this matter, he has said, in an article furnished for a work entitled "Modern History of Universalism: " —

"I never read anything on the doctrine of universal salvation

before I believed it, the Bible excepted; nor did I know, that I can now recollect, that there was anything published in its vindication in the world. Nor had I ever heard a sermon on the subject, except in boyhood I once heard Brother Rich, but concerning that sermon I realized nothing."

In speaking of his advance towards the knowledge of the truth, after his conversion, he says, in a published article: —

"It may be proper for me to state one circumstance which had no small tendency to bring me over to the ground on which I have for so many years felt established. It was by reading 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. This led me of course to examine the Scriptures, that I might determine the question, whether they did really teach that Jesus Christ died to reconcile an unchangeable God to his own children. You cannot suppose I was long in finding that, so far from teaching such absurdities, the Scriptures teach that 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.' The question concerning the Trinity was by the same means as speedily settled."

It is an interesting and curious fact that he should have been aided, as it were, by the darkness of error to find the light of truth. The obvious inconsistency in his former belief, made evident by the deist, did not win him to the faith of the latter, but rather led him to investigate for himself, and to find a religion more congenial with the native promptings of his own heart and the

evidences of the Bible. His was an exploring mind; he was not content to receive this faith, or that position, because others believed it, or because it had remained so long the unchallenged and unquestioned creed of the church. He must look into the matter and understand for himself, and make all parts of a doctrine to harmonize with each other, before he could reconcile it with his own reason and convictions.

This was a trait of character not alone observable in him as it related to the subject of religion; he applied the same rule to the affairs of every-day life, to political economy and business arrangements. He was always open to conviction, to reason and evidence, but could never embrace blindly any proposition whatever. Because the political party which the nearest assimilated to his views of the proper mode of government adopted this or that policy, he did not by any means consider it his duty to coincide with them, against his sober conviction, and he never did so; on the contrary, as often criticising the measures of one political party as another, and frequently finding much excellence, and principles worthy of commendation in the national policy of both. For this reason he could not be a politician, had he experienced an inclination that way. He was too honest.

CHAPTER VII. REMOVES TO PORTSMOUTH, N. H

After the expiration of a period of six years from the time of his first settlement in Barnard, Vt., and during which season he enjoyed an uninterrupted flow of kindness and good fellowship with the societies of his charge, he accepted the invitation of the society of Portsmouth, N. H., to become their pastor, and to devote his whole time to the good of the cause in that place. He had formed within the circle of his professional labors in Vermont a host of kind and warm-hearted friends, and it was a considerable period after the proposition had been made to him, before he could make up his mind to accept it. He did so, at last, however, influenced by several reasons.

First, the large field over which he was obliged to travel, while settled in Barnard, involved not only much physical labor and expense, but also the loss of a large amount of time, that might be devoted to more profitable pursuit. Then the pecuniary emolument offered him at Portsmouth was considerably larger than he had yet received, and his now growing family rendered such a fact to be a necessary consideration. And yet, let it not be supposed that there was any mercenary trait in his character; such was as foreign to his nature as was deceit, or

guile of any sort, as the progress of this biography will show. He realized, also, that, while such a change would diminish his physical labors, it would doubtless enlarge the sphere of his usefulness, bringing him in contact with larger audiences and more miscellaneous assemblages than usually gathered to listen to his public communications in a less thickly settled district.

He says, in this connection: – "I have found throughout my life, that whatever place I have long tarried in, I have become greatly attached to, and to the people with whom I associated. This was peculiarly the case in Barnard, and among the neighboring societies, with whom I was, for a period of six years, most agreeably, and I trust profitably associated. I long weighed the proposal from my friends in Portsmouth in my mind, before I could consent to break up a connection which had afforded me so much real satisfaction. But might I not render myself more useful by accepting this call? Was it not the design of my Master to enlarge my sphere of usefulness in his service? These things I weighed carefully in my mind, and prayed for counsel and power to enable me to judge of my duty aright; until, finally, believing it to be my duty, I accepted the call of my brethren in New Hampshire, and accordingly removed to Portsmouth."

Duly weighing these matters, he deemed it his duty, as he says, to bid his brethren in Vermont farewell, and he removed to Portsmouth in the year 1807, being in the thirty-sixth year of his age. Here he was installed, Nov. 8, the sermon on the occasion

being preached by Rev. Edward Turner, then of Salem. Though the pecuniary emolument, before referred to, was somewhat more than he had formerly received, yet it required an exercise of the utmost frugality and prudence to enable him to support his family comfortably. Indeed, this could not be done upon his salary as pastor of the Universalist Society alone, and therefore, in addition to his other numerous and arduous duties, he again taught school for a considerable period, while resident in this place, assisted by Hosea Ballou, 2d, now Dr. H. Ballou, of Medford. If it be true, as Lord Bacon has said, that reading makes a *full* man, conversation a *ready* man, and writing an *exact* man, then teaching certainly embraces the advantages to be derived from all three; and this Mr. Ballou found to be the case, as he has often said.

While resident in Portsmouth, notwithstanding the labors of the week, the necessary preparation for the Sabbath, and the earnest efforts that were required of him upon that sacred day, still he pursued a course of religious investigations into the subject of the holy text, that we are at a loss to know when he found time to consummate. It was at this period that he wrote his "Candid Review," in reply to a work by Rev. Isaac Robinson, A. M., upon some important doctrinal points. It is contained in one volume of two hundred pages, and adduces some of the strongest arguments in favor of impartial and universal grace that have ever been published, either by himself or others. This book was exceedingly popular at the time of its first appearance, and

created not a little excitement among religious controversialists in New Hampshire, and, indeed, throughout the New England States.

He also wrote, while resident in Portsmouth, a series of letters addressed to the Rev. Joseph Buckminster, upon important doctrinal subjects, which was published in one volume. A Controversy with Rev. Mr. Walton was written and published here, besides one or two minor works, including a school catechism, for a long period of years in general use among the denomination. In addition to the labor necessary to produce these in connection with his regular professional duties, he was also associate editor of a religious quarterly, entitled the "Gospel Visitant," in which, however, he had no further interest than his editorial connection. His contributions to this work were copious, and marked by the same profound reasoning capacity and lucid style that have characterized every work he has produced. It was while engaged in editing this publication that he came to the full belief that there was no punishment after death, and ever after, he preached the doctrine of universal salvation in this spirit, and labored strenuously in its defence and support.

Relative to this subject Mr. Ballou has written: – "I cannot say that I was fully satisfied that the Bible taught no punishment after death, until I obtained this satisfaction by attending to the subject with Bro. Edward Turner, respecting the doctrine of the Scriptures upon this question. We agreed to do the best we could, he in favor of future punishment, and I on the contrary. Our

investigations were published in a periodical called the 'Gospel Visitant.' 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 us no other sentient state but that which is called by the blessed name of life and immortality."

In another article relative to the same subject he says: – "The doctrine of punishment after death has, by many able writers, been contended for; some of whom have argued such punishment to be endless, and others limited. But it appears to me that they have taken wrong ground who have endeavored to support the latter, as well as those who have labored to prove the former. They have both put great dependence upon certain figurative and parabolical expressions, or passages of Scripture, which they *explain* so as to cause them to allude to such an event. It appears to me that they have not sufficiently attended to the nature of sin, so as to learn its punishment to be produced from a law of *necessity*, and not a law of *penalty*. Had they seen this, they would also have seen that a perpetuity of punishment must be connected with an equal continuance of sin, on the same principle that an effect is dependent upon its cause."

This brief paragraph will show the reader how Mr. Ballou was accustomed to argue upon this subject, of such vital importance to all, and which is a question still in the minds of many of our Universalist brethren, both ministry and laity.

At the expiration of six years from the date of his settlement

in Portsmouth, and during which time his association with the people of his charge, and others in that place, had been not only of the most pleasant and agreeable character, but also highly profitable as it regarded their mutual spiritual advancement, up to the period of the war with Great Britain, he made his arrangements to leave Portsmouth, having received an invitation from the Universalist Society in Salem, Mass., to settle in that town, and to devote his professional services to their especial good. Mr. Ballou says of his connection with the society in Portsmouth: —

"My connection with the people of Portsmouth was very cordial and happy, until that gloomy war-cloud which brought on a conflict with England came over the land. The anti-war party was numerous, and very influential; and, as I could not consent that my country was in the wrong, a bitter spirit became manifested towards me, which so operated towards the close of the war, that I became satisfied it was my duty to stay in that place no longer; and as the society in Salem was without a pastor, I received an invitation, which I accepted, to remove to that delightful place."

This was by no means a solitary instance or evidence of the warm patriotic fire that ever burned brightly in his bosom. He was ardently attached to the republican principles of our government, and never failed, on every suitable occasion, to evince the most earnest attachment for his country. Though a constant and untiring student of divinity, yet he was by no means

a novice in political economy; the basis of our institutions, and their true spirit as set forth by the constitution, the influences and natural results of our style of government, and the political soundness of the nation, were themes on which he was more than well informed, but yet he always carefully avoided mingling in party politics.

He removed to Salem in the month of June, 1815, where he found many cordial and true friends, whose memory and companionship he cherished to the close of life. While resident here he wrote a pamphlet in reply to one by John Kelley, A. M., entitled "Solemn and Important Reasons against becoming a Universalist." This review was comprised in a pamphlet of eighty pages, and is a strong and powerful argument in favor of the principles which the author believed, and which he advocated with such successful zeal. These minor publications of Mr. Ballou's, when now referred to, convey but a faint idea of the interest which they then produced. Their extended and immediate influence was evident. Vast numbers were sold; some zealous people, rejoicing at the joy unspeakable to which they had themselves attained through the author's writings and public communications from the pulpit, purchased them by wholesale, and distributed them gratis, far and near. His hearers, too, largely increased in numbers, and he was rewarded for his labors by witnessing the rich harvest that he was reaping in his Master's vineyard, and the number of souls he was leading in the paths of truth.

While resident in Salem, he also wrote a series of letters in reply to a series addressed to him by Abner Kneeland, inquiring into the authenticity of the Scriptures. The book formed of the letters referred to makes a volume of two hundred and fifty pages. The first edition was published in Salem, in 1816, the second in Boston, in 1820. The origin of these letters, which created no small degree of attention, at that period especially, was as follows: Rev. Mr. Kneeland having at various times expressed serious doubts and fears relative to the genuineness of the holy Scriptures, and the system of Divine revelation therein contained, solicited Mr. Ballou to enter into a correspondence with him upon the subject, in which Mr. Kneeland agreed to do his utmost to disprove the truth and authenticity of the Bible, while Mr. Ballou should take the opposite ground, and as strenuously defend it.

It was thought that this mode of discussion would be of mutual benefit to them, and at the time of its commencement was designed solely for their private use. But they were finally published, at the solicitation of friends, and with the hope that they might be productive of more extended good. These letters, which are somewhat lengthy, and indeed necessarily so on the part of Mr. Ballou, who assumed the laboring oar, were always written, as he has told us, at a single sitting. They are highly valuable, and were more particularly so at that period, as forming a powerful chain of evidence in favor of Christianity, and are characterized, on Mr. Ballou's part, by a vigorous accuracy and

earnest desire after truth, which prepossesses the reader in their favor.

Mr. Ballou knew very well the misgivings as to the truth of the Divine revelations by which Mr. Kneeland's mind was exercised, and, notwithstanding other pressing duties and regular engagements, he consented to a discussion which must needs cost him many hours of study and labor, hoping thereby to lead one soul, at least, to a full and clear belief in the gospel of Christ. These letters reached the number of ten on either side before the correspondence was brought to a close, when Mr. Kneeland was compelled by the force of evidence frankly to acknowledge his entire satisfaction and conversion; and having found such joy in believing, such relief at being released from the iron thralldom of doubt and fear, he was exceedingly anxious to publish the entire series of letters.

It should be remembered that at the present day, when we have so many excellent books to consult, and can avail ourselves of the experience and research of so many able minds, – men who have fought the good fight of faith, – it is a very easy matter to sit down and defend the gospel against the arguments of the sceptic, the ground being already thoroughly canvassed for us pro and con, and weapons keen and bright placed in our very hands. But Mr. Ballou enjoyed none of these advantages; his tools were wrought from the native ore, and skilled after the fashion of his own mind. Every line he wrote, every opinion he advanced, was the result of deep and careful study, without the assistance of any other book

save the Bible itself.

"As 1815 was the year after the war closed," says Mr. Ballou, "all kinds of provisions were extremely dear, and my salary was so poorly paid, that I could not get money enough from my friends to meet my expenses; and during the two years and four months I tarried here, I was compelled to spend about three hundred dollars more than I received, of money which I had by me when I came to Salem."

While resident in Salem, he applied himself with unremitting industry and diligence to his studies, devoting his time wholly to writing upon the subject of his faith, and the exercise of his professional duties as a minister. His labors here were particularly blessed with success, and the converts to his church were many. The Salem society under his charge vastly increased in influence and numbers, and Mr. Ballou had reason to rejoice at the very evident success of his labors with this people. When he first came to Salem, his doctrine, even by professed Universalists, was thought to be too radical, too universal, in short *too good*; but ere he left them, they had fallen almost unconsciously into his mode of belief, gradually, step by step, though the passage had been so easy that they had not realized the change until they found themselves already convinced.

It was not his practice to assail the unbeliever at once with blunt, open refutation of his principles, nor to stagger him by an array of unanswerable arguments, but realizing that a casual analogy often convinceth when the mind will not bear

argument, he adopted an easy and soothing course of reasoning, and thus gradually and easily sought his object. Thus was many an otherwise hopeless spirit turned from the darkness of error to the light of truth. Endeared to all his acquaintances by his unostentatious character, and by his mild, patient, and prudent habits, the separation from his society in Salem was mutually a hard task.

As soon as it was understood that Mr. Ballou had been talked of as pastor of the Second Universalist Society in Boston, Rev. Paul Dean, of respectable and influential standing in the order, and settled in Boston, strove by every manner of means to defeat this purpose. He feared the bold, unflinching, and manly style of preaching, for which Mr. Ballou had already become widely celebrated. Himself a man who avoided all sectional controversy in his preaching, he foresaw that the advent of Mr. Ballou in Boston would compel him to come out openly and acknowledge either that he was a Universalist or that he was not. He was not willing to risk his popularity in the matter, and therefore strove, by letters and orally, to dissuade Mr. Ballou from coming to Boston, and finally he declared to him that if he came hither he should consider it a breach of fellowship, and should ever after treat him accordingly.

Mr. Ballou was not one to be intimidated by threats; personal fear was a quality that he never realized. He came to Boston, and the sequel shows a result that is perfectly satisfactory to his friends. Mr. Dean was not prepared to make any great sacrifice

for the sake of truth; it was not at that time popular for him to preach downright Universalism. The opinions of most men are governed by circumstances, quite as much as by truthful evidence; but Mr. Ballou, with a single eye to truth, never catered for the popular taste, never asked whether the promulgation of this or that great principle of truth would be acceptable and popular; he had no such policy in his composition, but dealt only in wholesome truths, and such as his own heart had baptized in the clear, welling waters of conviction.

The editor of the *Christian Freeman*, Rev. Sylvanus Cobb, not long since published an account of his first interview with Mr. Ballou, which we subjoin in this connection, as being applicable in placing the subject of the controversy, which is well known to have existed, between Mr. Ballou and Mr. Dean, in a proper light. In speaking of his first visit to the city of Boston, from his home in Maine, the writer says: —

"At this time the scheme was in vogue with a few brethren, among whom Brs. Turner and Dean were conspicuous, for a division of the denomination, and the erection of a new order, which it was calculated would be the leading order, nearly swallowing up the other, to be entitled 'Restorationists.' We impute no evil motive to any one; but those on whom we called before reaching Bro. Ballou, felt it to be their privilege to make the projected scheme the chief subject of conversation, and to express much of the feeling of dissatisfaction towards Bro. Ballou. We were made to feel quite unhappy; and as we had heard

of Bro. Ballou as a stern and severe man, we expected to be even more harassed with a talk of 'troubles and difficulties' when in company with him. At length we were introduced to his presence, and took his friendly hand. He sat down by us, and with much interest and affection he inquired into our labors and prospects, and into the interests of the cause in Maine. We waited to hear him introduce the subject of the 'difficulties' but we waited in vain. At length we attempted to draw him out, by asking him of the nature of the 'difficulties' among the brethren here. 'I am ignorant,' said he, 'of any real difficulties. Certain brethren are believers in a limited future punishment; but I cannot see that that is any occasion for difficulty. Certainly I know of no reason why I should have any trouble with these brethren, or esteem them any the less for their seeing cause to believe as they do. But if they require me to believe it as essential to the Christian faith, I feel that it is proper for me to call on them for the proof of the doctrine. We cannot see with each other's eyes; we must be willing to allow each other to judge for himself. I love those brethren, and wish them prosperity and happiness.' And tears started from his eyes when he spoke. We felt that he spoke from the heart. There was no envy, no scheming, no party spirit about him. He sought a knowledge of God's word, and would 'speak God's word faithfully,' and accord the same right to others.

"And such we have ever found him. We have lived in neighborhood with him twenty-four years, and have found him one of the most modest, unassuming, liberal-minded and

true-hearted men we ever knew. He was always pained to see one crowding upon another. He would see all working and prospering, and rejoicing in each other's prosperity and happiness. May his spirit be with us all."

We might dilate upon the subject of this controversy, but it is not a congenial theme. Suffice it to say, then, that the shafts of envy and ambition launched forth against Mr. Ballou, were as innocent and harmless, as it regarded him, as the summer winds. It is true that they caused him anxiety of mind, and not a little annoyance, in disproving the malignant charges brought against him; but, in the end, these tests only caused his purity of character to shine out with more surpassing brilliancy.

CHAPTER VIII.

SETTLES IN BOSTON

After a peaceful and happy residence in Salem, of a little more than two years, Mr. Ballou received a cordial invitation from the Second Universalist Society of Boston to become their pastor. The invitation was accepted; and, in the forty-fifth year of his age, he removed to this city, and was installed December 15, 1817, in the church which was built with the avowed purpose of obtaining his ministerial services; and here he continued to preach to the people for over thirty-five years. His letter of acceptance, addressed to the society, is as follows: —

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.