Moral control was only a part of Hopedale's strivings for a Practical Christian society. Ballou accepted human depravity as a fact to be resisted, but he also believed that ultimate human goodness and happiness was God's intention and Man's obligation. Whatever the corruptness of people at any one time, their souls "are progressively ascending . . . through better and better forms, as by gradual process of purification, to higher stages of excellence." The process of purification was not an easy one, especially in regard to those who seemed doggedly resistant to moral improvement. In 1850 the Practical Christian said that the community had on some occasions received a few "vicious" people with the intention of reforming them only to injure itself without effecting a change, partly "because we had among us no skillful, experienced, and fully competent moral physicians." It resolved to abandon the attempt.¹

Ballou believed, however, that the truly vicious were only a small minority. Once enlightened to the promise of Practical Christianity, most humans would voluntarily commit themselves to the struggle for moral progress. Through the committed and guided exercise of their individual wills, they would cultivate the good and suppress the bad in their natures, at least when they were removed from a corrupting society to a "rational Christian union" like Hopedale, where cooperation rather than competition would prevail. If Ballou believed in the need for "an orderly well-regulated neighborhood," he linked this to a concern that everyone be afforded "decent opportunities for religious, moral, and intellectual culture" so that each individual could freely develop his or her full moral and mental potential.²
Life at Hopedale was often somber, especially during its pioneer years, but the community did attempt from the beginning to add an element of joy to its earnest strivings for improvement. In 1843 it announced that it was establishing the custom of “noticing the birthdays of the members . . . by an evening gathering, hymns, prayer, and personal congratulations. We have found these occasions truly affecting, profitable, and refreshing to our better feelings.” It also gave much attention to the subject of amusements, especially for children, a particularly perplexing matter for its leaders. On the one hand, they were suspicious of the often brutal, lewd, enervating, and time-wasting entertainments of the corrupted world; on the other hand, they recognized that there was a basic human need for some healthful diversion and merriment to provide occasional release from the serious business of life. How, then, to invent amusements that would nurture rather than detract from moral development?

This question became the particular concern in the 1840s of Daniel Whitney, the official servant for educational affairs, who became, as Ballou later called him, “a kind of Purveyor of Amusements.” Whitney spent much time inventing and arranging various sports, games, and other entertainments, his most notable effort being an attempt to establish monthly “festivals” where members met to sing, give speeches and readings, and play some games. This effort to consolidate communal feelings on a monthly basis seems to have faltered even before Whitney abandoned the community, but it did yield some more-permanent results, including an annual May Day festival that Whitney helped inaugurate in 1848 with a hymn, “Wildwood Flowers”:

And why should we not love the flowers
That grow about this Dale of ours
Sweet tokens they will ever prove
Of our dear Father’s precious love.

In 1850 a sympathetic visitor observed one May festival, celebrated with music and singing in the Hopedale chapel: “Across one end of the room is a table covered with refreshments, and with vases filled with fresh flowers. On the seats are the men, women, and children, looking so bright, so loving, intelligent and happy.”
Hopedale also celebrated the major traditional holidays in its own distinctive way. In 1845 some eighty people sat down at a long table in the machine shop to have Thanksgiving dinner, after which they sang hymns especially composed for the occasion. Eventually, the community even got around to commemorating the Fourth of July, despite its associations with war and riotous behavior, by emphasizing its connections with the rights of man rather than with nationalism. Without drunks and firecrackers, the community met to celebrate its own devotion to the divine principles of freedom. Such festivals, wrote William S. Heywood, "receive their characters from that which is useful substantial, true, and therefore have a permanancy and value peculiarly their own."  

Hopedale’s most momentous celebration was Christmas, held in December to commemorate not so much Christ’s birth—which was supposed to have been in the spring—as his example. It was a conscious defiance of New England’s religious past, when Puritans had spurned Christmas as a heathen holiday. In 1854 Heywood began his address to the assembled residents by making “a very unpuritanical wish,” that they have a Merry Christmas, one that would combine an earnest appreciation of Christ and of the Christian mission with “our idea of fraternal affection and sympathy in connection with social pleasure.” After the evening service, a large Christmas tree was unveiled loaded with “many golden and glittering treasures, and not a few fantastic toys.” Adults as well as children received gifts; an unnamed giver left a cow worth forty-five dollars in Ballou’s barn, while another anonymous donor placed thirty copies of Ballou’s latest book under the tree for distribution among the members.  

These affairs were pleasant ways to reinforce Hopedale’s commitment to its goals. The same could be said about its efforts to create a communal cultural life. The Practical Christians had little use for the fine arts, although they were pleased when in 1845 a generous neighbor in Milford paid a portrait artist, Bass Otis, to paint a portrait of Ballou, which was then exhibited in Boston as well as in the Milford area. A town people suspicious of the high culture of the corrupted cities, they were not inclined to the visual arts. On the other hand, Ballou and his associates did believe that artistic works could be used as agencies of moral power to “regulate all the
affections, faculties, interests, relations and conduct of rational creatures.”

The greatest of these instruments of moral power, they believed, was music, the most harmonious of the arts. Although Hopedale gave some encouragement to instrumental music, its dominant concern was singing, an art form sanctioned not only by religious tradition but by the example of the singing Hutchinson family, who lent their popularity and talents to the abolitionist cause. “Who has ever listened to the simple, pathetic, soul-subduing, heart-purifying strains of our Hutchinsons,” asked Ballou, “without confessing the majesty of music—the potency of its sway over all the feelings of our nature? Could we bring every band, every choir, all the masters of this captivating art into the service of Temperance, Freedom and Peace, what would they not accomplish for our world?”

From the beginning the community intended to make the moralizing power of music a central element of its life, voting in May 1842 that every Tuesday evening be “appropriated to improvement in singing.” Vocal music enlivened both its festivals and its religious services. When in 1843 the Fraternal Communion gathered to celebrate Ballou’s fortieth birthday, its members sang a hymn written by Abby Price for the occasion:

Sing! Hopedale, sing! your voices raise,
Let every heart attuned to praise,
Raise loud the cheerful lay;
Praise God who gave our brother dear,
Who spares his life from year to year,
To cheer us on our way.

Over the next decade, members of the community composed dozens of hymns to celebrate special occasions and especially its mission to free the intemperate, slaveholding, fighting world from its sinful ways:

This heaven and earth shall be renewed
By God’s regenerating word,
All nature to be Christ subdued,
Nor sound of sin or woe be heard.

Most of these hymns were published, first in the Practical Christian and then in two collections: The Hopedale Collection of Hymns and
Songs for Use of Practical Christians (1850), which included some three dozen of Hopedale's own songs along with others selected from various sources, and the more completely original Communal Songs and Hymns (1856). The two collections were an armory of hymns for the temperance, abolitionist, and nonresistance causes.¹⁰

Ballou, the author of didactic verse as well as prose, wrote the greatest number of hymns, with such titles as “Who Is a Christian?” “Breakfast Hymn,” and “Social Reform.” Almost as prolific were two women. The talented Abby Price composed songs both for various celebrations and on general themes of reform, ten of which were published in the Hopedale Collection. The other woman was Mary Colburn, Mary Jackman until she married the recently widowed Samuel Colburn in 1844. Mrs. Colburn contributed eleven hymns on reform themes to the Hopedale Collection, including one entitled “New Social State”:

Then man, transformed in mind,  
His God-like powers shall prove,  
And make this new-created earth  
A paradise of love.

Although she lacked Abby Price’s dynamic interest in woman’s rights issues, she impressed Ballou as being a woman of “literary genius in poetry and public addresses on reformatory themes.”¹¹

Many of Hopedale hymns were intended to awaken the outside world to reform themes, but others were designed to remind itself of its special commitment to a Practical Christian life. One of the longest in the 1856 collection was the “Song of Compact,” which began:

We cheerfully agree, all agree,  
To live in unity, unity  
And faithfully fulfill  
The compact we have made.

Another, “Money,” acknowledged the importance of the green stuff even in a Practical Christian society but reminded all that it was “made for righteous use” and not for “idol worship.”¹² Overall, Hopedale made the song and the hymn a force for communal unity and a reminder of communal obligation.

Music was not the community’s only or perhaps even most re-
vealing cultural pride. In general, the members of the community were, as the *Practical Christian* boasted in 1857, "a plain, practical people . . . much like the middle class of New England generally," not one of whom held a university degree. Like most of the small-town middle class, however, they hungered for the cultural benefits often found only in cities during these years of limited communications. Although true Christianity was opposed to the corrupted culture of the corrupted world, Ballou insisted, it was not opposed to "any kind of useful knowledge, per se, or to any kind of mental culture or accomplishment in itself"; rather, true Christians should make "it an imperative duty—a part of their morality—to cultivate by continued exercise the intellectual nature." Like Ballou himself, Practical Christians had little use for university education, which seemed perversely designed to suppress rather than to nurture both good sense and inspired creativity. It was the right and duty, then, of plain people like themselves to find a better way to cultivate the intellectual as well as the moral side of human nature.

Hopedale attempted to balance its control over moral behavior with a commitment to intellectual freedom as part of its larger pledge to protect every member from the "oppression" of ignorance. "Hostility to new opinions is exceedingly unfavorable to the intellectual and spiritual improvement of our race," said William Henry Fish in 1846. "Hence we have assumed the position that every conscientious individual should ‘utter all his moral convictions as freely as the winds blow and the waters run.’" As the editor of the *Practical Christian*, Ballou said that it was his policy to go "for the largest liberty of thought and expression, not fundamentally intolerable," meaning that, beyond the "few and plain" truths essential to the community, nothing was sacred and nothing was to be ignored in the search for truth. Such limitations as Fish's reservation of freedom to "conscientious" individuals did not please radical libertarians, but they cast few shadows over thought at Hopedale. When Robert Owen spent two days in the village in late 1845, his opinions were welcomed even though his naive communism and materialism had been rejected by the community.

The *Practical Christian* provided space for members to state their opinions, and at various times this opportunity was expanded by two other periodicals issued by the Hopedale press. In the mid 1840s
Ballou’s son, Adin Augustus Ballou, published a young people’s paper, the *Mammoth*, on an irregular basis until he grew tired of it in 1848. For a year in 1851–52, a somewhat more mature paper, the *Diamond*, was published as a bimonthly; one of its three editors was George T. Garrison, the eldest son of William Lloyd Garrison, who had been sent by his abolitionist father to the Hopedale school because “it is a great thing to be with those who are virtuous, upright, kind, and loving in all their dealings.” The paper was largely a miscellany of stories, bits of information, and various puzzles (a conundrum: “Why is congress like a ledger?” Answer, because “it contains ciphers.”), but its young editors did uphold their promise to “fearlessly denounce errors and propagate truth.” Although they rejected one reader’s demand that they take a stand in favor of boy’s rights (“wait till your beard grows”), they did advocate a woman’s right to “define her own sphere and be and do all she is capable of doing.” The *Diamond* was terminated in March 1852 when its editors completed their education at Hopedale.

Far from attempting to cut itself off from the outside world, Hopedale made a determined effort to keep itself informed of intellectual progress. The *Practical Christian* published in every issue various articles clipped from other periodicals, mostly from reform papers like Garrison’s *Liberator* and Horace Greeley’s *New York Tribune* but also from a wide variety of more-worldly sources such as the *Scientific American*, the *Boston Traveler*, and the *New York Herald*. To assure itself even greater access to the outside, the community voted in 1846 to create its own postal service to provide for the delivery of outside papers to individual subscribers. By 1855 this village of less than two hundred people was taking a total of 130 issues of various periodicals on a regular basis, not counting the issues of some 60 papers received by the community in exchange for the *Practical Christian*.

Ballou took great pride in the belief that Hopedale demonstrated how nonresistance could enable society to concentrate its spending on education and culture rather than on instruments of violence and coercion. In 1850 he deplored the wealth wasted in war which might have been used to eliminate human ignorance, estimating that the amount of money spent on even a small conflict like the Seminole War in Florida could have purchased three collections of
all of the some three million books that the world had published over the previous four centuries. In 1842, while it was still struggling to get started, the community began a small public library, one of the first in the country. By 1855 the Hopedale library, located in the combined school and chapel building, had over six hundred volumes, excluding various public documents sent to it by Senator Charles Sumner and other sympathetic congressmen. Open at least once a week for lending purposes, the library had its established rules, including fines for overdue books.

For purposes of entertainment as well as edification, the community had met to discuss ideas and issues from its earliest days. "In the course of each year, we have had," said Fish, "not only some new, but some strange . . . views presented to us—sometimes by members of the community, sometimes by persons from abroad." In 1846 Hopedale began to institutionalize this practice by providing for monthly "Lyceum and conference meetings," and in 1849 this scheme was expanded by organizing all inhabitants over twelve years of age into a community lyceum that was to meet once a week during the colder months and once a month during the growing season. The officers of the lyceum were instructed "to procure the delivery of at least one instructive scientific or literary lecture every month, to provide suitable questions for public discussion . . . to encourage the writing of brief essays by the members . . . to promote the formation of original classes for the prosecution of useful studies, and in general to execute its order and minister its affairs in such a manner as to render it an efficient instrumentality for mental improvement." Over the following years, members gave lectures, declamations, and readings on such matters as vegetarianism and the industrial advantages of a cooperative community, inspired by the hope of improving their knowledge and reasoning powers.

A shortage of money limited the number of outside lecturers, but in the summer and fall of 1850 the lyceum did get Professor William S. Brown to give a course of lectures on chemistry, probably in response to Ballou's call earlier in the year for a scientific analysis of the soils in the community domain. Brown evoked much interest among the members, some of whom formed a chemistry class during the winter: "Who seeks for science will her treasures gain." Later, it listened to Luther Hills, a phrenologist, lecture on the "causes of ce-
rebral, physiological, mental, and moral deprivation." Hills re­
turned to give two lecturers on physiological abuses, "especially
those of a sexual nature," supporting his case with numerous pic­
tures and with "stubborn facts in resistless array." Ballou was con­
vinced that Hills had brought "a measure of physiological and tem­
poral salvation" to at lest some of his listeners.21 In general, the
lyceum seemed to demonstrate the ability of a community like
Hopedale to provide itself with intellectual advantages not avail­
able in towns many times larger.

The lyceum meetings were only part of a much larger system of
intellectual improvement that Hopedale was attempting to create.
Ballou was an ardent advocate of education at every stage of life. In
1846 he asked: "If every human being over seven years of age could
be enabled and induced to expend habitually four hours per day in
positive intellectual and moral exertion, need there remain through
the third generation a single ignorant, vulgar, vicious, irreligious
person on earth?" He dreamed of a comprehensive system of educa­
tion that would progressively improve the physical, emotional, in­
tellectual, industrial, social, and religious natures of all people,
down to such details as their diets, habits, skills, manners, and sex­
ual relationships.22

Ballou placed much responsibility on individual parents. The
training of the next generation was to begin even before birth with
appropriate care of the mother to prevent debilitating damage to the
fetus and was to continue in the family until adulthood. In 1841,
before Hopedale was established, he published a long article ad­
dressed to parents on the development of their children. After con­
fessing that he had been himself a "sinner in the treatment of my
children," he condemned the prevailing tendency to depend for dis­
cipline on "whipping, slapping, cuffing, shaking, and pinching," a
battering of children's bodies that had no place in a nonresistant
community. He emphasized that he was not opposed to discipline
but rather that he was advocating a better means that required from
parents a "steady hand and general good management." With the
promise that he would himself try to practice what he preached, he
laid down fifteen rules to manage children, culminating with "train
them to think, feel, speak and act for themselves, as answerable to
God rather than man."23
Outside the family, the community was also to be the good, steady parent of its young. From the beginning children were a major presence at Hopedale; of 163 people listed by the census taker in 1850, 70 were younger than eighteen. While it was struggling to survive during its first year, the community had begun to create its own educational system, in fulfillment of its constitutional promise “to secure to our posterity the blessings of a more salutary, physical, intellectual, and moral education.” The first building erected in the village, in the spring of 1842, contained a schoolroom, and less than two years later the community built the combined schoolhouse and chapel with the help of outside donations. Initially, the community had to finance its education on its own while also paying school taxes to the town of Milford (of which it was a part), being unwilling to accept town interference in its educational affairs. Finally, in 1847 Milford agreed to return part of the taxes to the community, while allowing it control over its school.24

By then Hopedale was able to provide schooling for all of its children, ages five to eighteen, four hours a day for nearly forty weeks a year, in line with its determination that “no child or youth . . . shall be permitted to grow up without a decent education in the common branches of useful learning.” In 1848 the school was placed under the authority of a newly created Board of Education and Mental Improvement and supported by a “perpetual” education tax of 1 percent on the income of members; this tax was later raised to 1½ percent and then in 1852 made dependent on the ability of each member to pay, “he or she being privileged to abate or increase the rate.” By 1854 the growth in the number of students to nearly sixty required the creation of two separate classes and the enlargement of the school building.25

The physical facilities were hardly better than those of an ordinary one-room village school. The system of instruction, however, was a source of much pride, particularly after 1848 when the Board of Education and Mental Improvement put the school in the charge of Ballou’s daughter, Abbie, recently graduated from the state normal school at West Newton. Abbie S. Ballou was a natural teacher who had acquired an understanding of the art and science of teaching. “We admire the system of instruction adopted by Miss Ballou,” wrote an observer from Milford in 1848. “We have rarely witnessed
so much affability blended with so much dignity. . . . In her recita­tions, joining herself with the class, addressing them as though she were only an older member of their own body.” She was herself only nineteen.  

The Milford observer and subsequent visitors were even more im­pressed by the facility of the children in answering difficult ques­tions, particularly those in arithmetic. In 1854 Ballou was very pleased with the performance of the pupils during their public ex­amination, noting that they multiplied, divided, and squared num­bers given to them in rapid succession without difficulty; he made special note of their ability to understand the basic principles of arithmetic: “The principles thus brought within the comprehension of your children, will enable them to solve all kinds of problems that ever occur.” The pupils also impressed him with their knowledge of such subjects as grammar, reading, geography, and, one of Ballou’s favorites, physiology.  

Undoubtedly, public exhibitions did not represent day-to-day re­alities, as the community itself recognized. There was some ex­pressed concern over absences and the less than perfect order among the pupils. And among the reasons given for the expulsion of Mat­thew Sutcliffe in 1853 was his persistence in complaining that his children had been “slighted, neglected, degraded, or mistreated either by the Teacher or other scholars.” However, the school seems to have been a fair expression of a community concerned with the preparation of its children to be rational as well as useful citizens of the new social world. More than occasionally, the pro­cess received reinforcement from the lyceums and from individual members, especially Edmund Soward. The English-born mechanic and father of horticulture at Hopedale had a self-educated man’s en­thusiasm for knowledge which made him “the Encyclopedia of ref­erence to our whole Community.” Soward, a widower, took special delight in instructing the young, holding special classes for them during the winter months. On his death in late 1855, he willed his little property to the Hopedale school; in one instance, money from the Soward fund was used to take some of the younger children to Boston to see some “trained seals and mice.”  

The strongest communal reinforcement for education came from Adin Ballou himself. Although generally satisfied with the school’s
performance, Ballou wanted much more, a system that would cultivate all children in all aspects so as to assure an intelligent adherence to the requirements of Practical Christianity. This, he complained in 1847, the community had neglected to do, allowing by this neglect for the development of "vicious habits" in the young. He urged that the women meet frequently to consult on ways by which the range of moral and religious influence could be extended. The chief problem was the free time that children had beyond the control of the community. In theory, idle minds and hands could be kept busy in useful work. In 1846 the community appointed a committee "to see that the boys be employed after school hours"; nine years later it appointed another committee to draft some plan to incorporate manual labor into the children's schooling. Except for the infrequently mobilized Industrial Army and more frequent exhortations to parents, however, little was done to resolve the problem, probably because the village simply did not have enough work for its young people to do.

Ballou gave more personal attention to another situation in which he took a particular interest. Perhaps because he was the father of two teenagers, he became concerned with extending the moral and intellectual culture of young people beyond the existing school. In 1848, when he was elected a member of the new Board of Education and Mental Improvement, he began to meet every Monday evening with a group of young adults for the purpose of discussing various issues. When that group proved to be too small and unstable to be perpetuated, he expanded it to include adolescents, giving it a formal organization in 1849 as the Inductive Community. As its named indicated, this association was intended to complete the preparation for membership in the Practical Christian Communion. It was designed to be a self-regulating "mutual improvement society for the cultivation of the religious and moral sentiments, the intellectual faculties, and true self-respect of our young people." Generally with Ballou in attendance, groups of from five to thirty youths met each Monday evening at the home of a member of the community to discuss readings and to give papers on various subjects. Beginning in July 1851, these papers and other writings were published in a handwritten monthly, the "Inductive Harbinger," with an appointed editor, female or male, for each issue.
Ballou generally guided the discussions with a gentle but strong hand. When he was asked to give his opinion on novels and other forms of fiction, he said that he was “a matter of fact man” who found enough interest in nonfiction without resorting to readings of a doubtful character. Much of the early attention of the group was devoted to historical works because Ballou hoped to teach the right use of history. Over the years, though, the group seems to have become more active in selecting for itself such subjects of contemporary interest as woman’s rights, education, and vegetarianism (Ballou confessed that he had not been able to decide on the matter of meat eating but recommended against it when possible).

The writings in the “Inductive Harbinger” were probably a fair reflection of Ballou’s influence on the thinking of the young. In the first issue John Gaffney, a twenty-two-year-old laborer from Ireland, stated the position of the new paper: “We will make no compromise with War, Slavery, Intemperance or the thousand ways which man has invented to oppress and live at the expense of his fellow man, but will ever speak the truth.” In a subsequent issue young John Mundy rejected the idea that sinful men could be saved by a simple act of conversion: “I think that the redemption of this world is to be expected by obeying the moral and physical laws of our Creator,” which demanded a lifetime of self-discipline. Later one writer was enthusiastic about the progress of science and invention, especially in creating improved conditions for moral and intellectual development: “The world was never wiser nor better than it is today.” It was, then, the duty of the young to strive even harder to improve themselves—to aim, said another young enthusiast, as high as possible: “I will only stop at perfection.” In a still later issue “Lida” defended idealists like herself against the criticism that they were too fanciful and visionary, by arguing that imagination “elevates the mind above that which is sensual and selfish, and quickens it into spiritual life & allies the soul to angels.”

Ballou found much satisfaction in this involvement with young minds, but the Inductive Communion was not enough to fulfill his ambitions for education. Aside from the occasional nature of its meetings, the Communion suffered from fluctuating membership. In 1853 Joseph Bailey, one of its leaders, said that only a handful of the founding members remained, most of the rest having “left this place
and scattered in various directions. Some . . . have gone astray in the paths of sin and folly.” The fact that Bailey, a twenty-seven-year-old English-born worker, himself remained with the group from beginning to end was not particularly exceptional, but the turnover was high enough to underscore the need to provide greater opportunities for the education of young adults within the village.

That Ballou was obliged to send his own children outside to complete their education intensified his interest in the problem. What Hopedale seemed to need was some way to realize his dream of a system that would embrace all, “from the infant group to the highest collegiate class.” In 1848 he served on a committee, along with his exassociate George Stacy, that recommended that the town of Milford establish a high school, but the establishment of such a worldly school would not serve Hopedale’s needs. The village was too small to support a higher school by itself, but by 1851 Ballou had devised a solution that he hoped would provide the right kind of advanced education not only for Hopedale but for the outside world.

In December the *Practical Christian* published his plan for “the Hopedale Educational Home” to provide every level of education from the primary through the collegiate. This “new and peculiar Educational Institution” was to provide training at reasonable rates for all youth regardless of class, race, or sex:

One great want of the age is an Educational Institute, in which the sons and daughters of the common people, especially those friendly to the great Reforms and to constructive Progress, may receive a comprehensive and well balanced development of all natural faculties. An Educational Home for children and youth is demanded . . . where by day and night, in study, in active exercise, in recreation, in the parlor, in the dining-room, in social intercourse, and in public places, they may be cared for with parental fidelity.

The new school would give students “a high toned moral character . . . a sound mind well cultivated, stored with useful knowledge and capable of inquiring, reasoning, and judging for itself . . . a healthful vigorous body . . . good domestic habits . . . and generous social qualities.” It would teach all to be self-sustaining individuals not only by giving them an education in the useful arts but also by pro-
viding them with practical work for which they would be paid on the basis of actual results.  

Ballou projected a boarding school for two hundred students, some from Hopedale, to be built for twenty-five thousand dollars, mostly from outside sources. He had plans drawn for a large three-story academy building, potentially the most imposing edifice in town. It was an ambitious plan, but he believed that the reform-minded world was ready for it, citing as an example a recent call by Horace Greeley for colleges "which shall graduate not merely Masters of verbal, but Masters of useful arts."  

By benefiting the outside world, the Educational Home would also benefit Hopedale, making it a center of advanced reform culture, providing it with a new and large business, and extending the education of its own young people. It would be the nonresistant version of the "booster college" common to town-building schemes, especially in the West, which would attract the right people and support from outside. And it would satisfy Ballou's personal need to find a place within the community for his son, Adin Augustus Ballou, who was soon to reach adulthood.

Ballou took great pride in his daughter, Abbie, but the apple of his eye was the son whose birth in 1833 had saved him from the utter despair of having lost his first two sons to disease. The father tried his best to mold Augustus along both rational and spiritual lines. When the boy requested to see a militia muster at nearby Milford, Ballou used it as an opportunity to present his nonresistant views, refusing either to deny or to agree to the request; the boy decided not to go. When he was seventeen, Adin Augustus expressed an ideal for himself that his father undoubtedly approved: "Be an independent man, a free thinker, a mighty actor. Be a wise man, a careful discriminator. Be a good man blending humanity with impetuosity, humility with power. Be independent and hold for the right and let your whole strength go to improve and not to destroy God's creatures."  

The young man was raised to be a responsible and productive leader in his father's world. At the age of ten he was placed in the Hopedale printshop with the idea of making him a printer and publisher, and when he was twelve he began the periodical *Mammoth*. At fourteen, he became foreman of the printshop,
while also issuing the *Mammoth*, attending school, managing the community post office, and learning to play the violin.\(^{40}\)

In 1849 he was liberated from the burdensome job of foreman in order to prepare himself to attend the state normal school at Bridgewater, but the gentle yet persistent pressures exerted by his father remained. In 1850 he was taken to the graves of “my departed brothers,” two boys he had never seen but whose places he must have felt obliged to fill. The next year he was admitted to membership in the community, having resolved, so his father believed, to devote his life to creating the new Practical Christian social order. Although Adin Augustus had many happy moments at Hopedale, he was undoubtedly ready and eager, in the summer of 1850, to begin his training as a teacher at Bridgewater; in little more than a year he so impressed the normal school authorities that he was offered the position of junior assistant principal.

Again, however, there were pressures, since by then Ballou had conceived of the Educational Home, whose principal when it opened was to be Adin Augustus. The young man’s feelings are not known, but it is notable that, as his father did when he had faced career anxieties many years before, Augustus had a vision. Early in 1852, as a friend later told Ballou, he was returning to his room when “suddenly a spirit-voice uttered distinctly to his soul the premonition *You are going to be very sick!*” Within hours he became violently ill from influenza, and two weeks later, on 8 February, he died despite the watchful care of his helplessly anxious parents.\(^{41}\)

The remains of Adin Augustus Ballou, aged eighteen, were buried in the Hopedale cemetery; the tombstone erected by his parents was inscribed with a verse that began “most precious treasure of our hearts.” It was a crushing blow for Ballou, who only shortly before had resigned as president of the community in part to concentrate on the Educational Home. Rather than carry out his dream, he wrote and published a memoir of his departed son, expressing the hope to its readers that “if you are parents, may you be blessed with children like Augustus. If you must mourn their early dissolution, may you mourn with as much to comfort you, as they [the Ballous] have who hope in a few fleeting years to be welcomed by such a son and brother to the home of the angels.”\(^{42}\)
Ballou had more than the usual confidence that he would see his son again, since in April 1852 he printed in the *Practical Christian* a lengthy report on a series of communications “purported to come from the spirit of Adin Augustus Ballou, our dear Son, through Elizabeth Alice Reed of Hopedale, Writing Medium.” Starting a few days after Augustus’s death, the communications presented a hopeful view. In one, Augustus said that he was finally able to meet his two dead brothers, who were doing well; in another, he assured his father that while he saw travails ahead for the people on earth, he could glimpse the dawn of a better day: “Father, be patient. . . . Another century cannot commence, before this great change will be wrought.” After describing heaven in notably rational terms, the messages abruptly ceased without explanation, but not before they had convinced Ballou that they were authentic.

The communications not only gave heart to the grieving father but seemed to confirm a new phenomenon that had already begun to add another dimension to his thinking. In the summer of 1851 Hopedale had become aware of modern spiritualism, which had started to sweep the world of progressive religion like a prairie fire. In the fall, six months before Augustus died, Ballou published a series of articles in the *Practical Christian* on spiritualism in which he accepted as “absolute fact” that there had been thousands of indications of “some invisible power or agency not consciously existing in mortal human beings” which had made connections with the spirit world. He himself had “received many excellent communications. . . . My whole moral nature has been purified and elevated by the influences which flowed in upon me.” Subsequently, he wrote a book on the subject of spirit manifestations which was first published in Boston in 1853 and then republished in England.

On the surface at least Ballou remained the rationalist he had ever been in spiritual matters. He warned his readers to be skeptical about many alleged phenomena, a skepticism reinforced by some of his followers, including Abby Price, who, after noting the widespread interest in séances at Hopedale, said that the communications were often no better than those “received from the same persons in a natural healthful state.” Moreover, Ballou was concerned that spiritualism might evolve into a religion at the expense
of Christianity, or at least encourage such "sexual aberrations" as free love.\(^45\)

On the other hand, he was willing to describe himself as "a rational, discriminating, Christian Spiritualist." He was excited by visions of a world of spiritual energy that promised ever-new miracles of progress. When the spiritualist Andrew Jackson Davis proposed a scheme to control and direct the fall of rain so as to benefit arid regions, Ballou republished the idea with the observation that, as wild as it seemed, it was not necessarily impossible: "We have passed the age of impossibility."\(^46\) And so it was that practical men drifted into fantasies of new and miraculous powers.

Ballou took some special hope from the thought that spiritualism might, if rightly guided, aid the cause of Christian reform, particularly by intensifying popular spirituality and by confirming the belief that "Mankind are by nature one family of brothers and sisters." He saw in the writings of some of the spiritualists "many truthful, sublime, and beautiful ideas" that served to confirm his faith in the eventual coming of the millennium, of that glorious time when heaven would invade the earth.\(^47\) Out of his grief, with the help of spiritualism, he wrought a strengthened hope for the triumph of good over evil. Out of it, also, he formed a new resolve to continue his own efforts to work a conversion of the world. For a short time he was inspired to a renewed hope that, indeed, Hopedale would prove to be the place from which an earthly heaven could be made for all humankind.