Larger Worlds

Spiritualism added new life to hopes for spiritual revolution and regeneration during the early 1850s. Later, Thomas Low Nichols said that it had "affected the religion, philosophy, and, more or less, the morals of great numbers of the American people." Nichols concluded that the most pronounced effect was to break down old religious loyalties and to set people adrift from the established churches. Whether this was good or bad was a matter of much dispute, but most observers could at least agree that the new phenomenon was a populist one born among the people, outside traditional institutions of religion. "Spiritualism did not radiate from a definite center," said the spiritualist Emma Hardinge, "but sprang with a spontaneous and irresistible life of its own." As such, at least during its early years, it offered the hope for some dramatic leap away from the stodgy, if not corrupted, religions of the past toward a new and larger world of spirit open to all people.

William S. Heywood, Ballou's son-in-law, went so far as to compare spiritualist phenomena with "the wonderful things that purported to have taken place near the commencement of the Christian Era." A new age of intensified religion seemed to be opening. Ballou's Restorationism, with its emphasis on the continuation of moral struggle beyond death, prepared him to accept the idea of a great world of individual spirits eager to communicate with earth on ways of moral improvement. In 1853 he noted approvingly that "regular religious Circles have just been organized at Hopedale, for Spiritual improvement and communication." On May Day of that year his sometime associate John Murray Spear visited Hopedale, where, wrote Abby Price, "he went into a Magnetic state, during
which he gave us a good talk about good things." Although Ballou remained skeptical regarding many of the alleged truths revealed by spirits and anxious over the possible impact on Christianity, he was influenced by spiritualism in ways even he did not fully recognize.

Spiritualist belief often produced a fantastic expansion of thought and imagination. Spear, for instance, claimed in 1854 that the spirit world had revealed to him the specifications of a "New Motor" that would provide unlimited power; he later maintained that a mob had destroyed the marvelous new engine before it could operate and that the spirits refused to repeat the specifications. Ballou avoided such contraptions, but spiritualism influenced his cosmological ideas, some of which had become by this time both fantastic and eminently modern. In discussing the fundamental principles of Practical Christianity, he wrote that God had manifested his divine nature "in all earths, heavens and universes" and went on to describe what he called God's "Infinitarium," a universe of innumerable suns and earths only partly revealed by modern telescopes: "If we could be transported with such telescopes to one of these distant earths, probably we should there discover as many others beyond, mere specks in the remote skies." In such a universe of innumerable earths, there would be innumerable populations and innumerable heavens occupied by innumerable souls, a universe teeming with spiritual life.

Ballou's earlier Universalist and Restorationist beliefs had prepared him for this cosmology, but there was at least one important difference between the old and the new. Practical Christianity had been shaped to the example provided by the historical Jesus and his Primitive Church, a unique instance of devoted Christian community, but in the Infinitarium there was room for numberless manifestations of God through numberless Christs. Although Christ Jesus remained God's highest manifestation on earth, "our great Prince Messiah," his uniqueness and importance were diminished in the endless expanse of space and time.

This new universe was even more pregnant with progress than the old, to be guided not only by New Testament truths but by "fresh and even more glorious" revelations in the future. In the course of progress, spirit was sure to triumph over a dead church and an evil world. Ballou grew more convinced than ever that there was "a glo-
rious destiny for mankind" for which it was the obligation and the glory of the faithful to labor.7 Heartened by Hopedale's success, he redoubled his efforts to persuade the world that he had found the way to that glorious future when heaven would be realized on earth.

His principal pulpit continued to be the biweekly Practical Christian, the four-page sheet he had begun in 1840 under the motto “We love all, but can flatter none.” Year after year, he and his associates dreamed of making it a weekly, but they were unable to get a sufficient number of paying subscribers, although their circulation extended as far west as Illinois.8 “We are too radical and yet too conservative, too exclusive and yet too liberal,” wrote Ballou in 1848. “Too visionary and yet too practical . . . to be acceptable to many people.” At times, disappointed hopes drove him to some bitter but not inaccurate observations about the general reading public: “This public loves to be flattered rather than corrected—to be caressed into sin, rather than chastened into righteousness.” Even among the small band of loyal readers, there were those who failed to pay their dues, leading him to threaten to evoke “our non-resistant plan of collecting debts,” that is, to stop the subscriptions.9 Year after year, however, he continued his efforts to make the Practical Christian a mighty force for righteousness and reform.

The paper and various other Hopedale publications were printed in a little shop attached to Ballou’s house. The work could be unhealthy as well as demanding. Soon after Adin Augustus Ballou became foreman of the shop, he began to have recurrent headaches, which he blamed on the noxious fumes from a small charcoal furnace used to keep the ink and type warm. Having purchased the printing business from the community in 1847, the older Ballou realized that he did not have the time to manage it and, in order to relieve his son from the work, sold the business in 1849 to Asaph G. Spaulding, who ran it for several years. Spaulding improved the typographical style of the paper, increased its meager advertising, and generally tried to make the paper self-sustaining. Although he was able to realize a modest profit from printing done for people in the surrounding area, the Practical Christian continued to lose money, forcing the community to provide a small annual subsidy.10

Ballou continued as editor of the paper. Many of his editorials
were labored disquisitions on various religious and moral issues, but he also provided much lively and often acute commentary on the events of the day. In March 1854, for instance, he predicted that the Kansas-Nebraska Bill would raise a conflict over slavery that would not end "till chattel slavery is numbered with the abominations that were." Although he once complained that he could not print every bit of "scribbling and babbling" sent to him, he published many letters from not always sympathetic correspondents and responded to those dealing with serious issues. Along with occasional reports on events at Hopedale, he included a potpourri of articles on spiritualism, temperance, physiology, education, and various other matters of interest to the reform-minded reader. The Practical Christian was destined to remain only a feeble moral light in the often lurid blaze of American journalism, but those who paid the one dollar a year subscription price got their money's worth in a generally well-printed miscellany enlivened by the influence of a first-rate mind.11

The 1850s also raised new hopes for more direct missionary work. In 1841 the Fraternal Communion had established quarterly and annual conferences to coordinate what was expected to be a growing number of Practical Christian communities, but the communion remained little more than Hopedale itself, and in 1847 it was abandoned. With better times in 1848, Ballou, Fish, and Whitney had revived their missionary effort by creating the Practical Christian Ministry with the aim of organizing people into local "Inductive Communions" that would prepare their members to form new communities like Hopedale.12 The Practical Christian Ministry brought some life back into the quarterly conferences, which were held at various places in Massachusetts in the hope of attracting converts. Although the immediate results were rather meager, they were enough to convince Ballou that, like Hopedale itself, the Practical Christian Ministry was destined to enjoy a sure growth and ultimate success.13

That conviction became an enthusiasm in 1854 when a combination of factors, including the rise of spiritualism, persuaded him that Practical Christianity was ready to shift from the faltering steps of childhood to the strides of maturity. Before the end of 1852 he had recovered sufficiently from Adin Augustus's death to resume his mis-
sionary work and to publicize Hopedale. The growing prosperity of the orderly little village seemed to demonstrate that it could become an example to a world that, with the reckless times that had begun with the California gold rush, was becoming more corrupt, unequal, and chaotic than ever before. Early in 1853 Ballou published his *Concise Exposition of the Hopedale Community* to illustrate how the community had resolved what he considered the great social problem of the day, that is, how to achieve "moral order, individual freedom, and social cooperation, each in due degree, and all in harmony." 14

The *Exposition* was part of a broader campaign to win the world's attention to Practical Christianity. In the summer the Practical Christian Communion announced that its annual meeting to be held at Blackstone (a textile village near the Rhode Island border) would welcome all those who were friendly not only to Practical Christianity but to "Constructive Reform." To emphasize the point further, Ballou announced that he was sending free copies of the *Practical Christian* "for an indefinite length of time to a large number of friends, understood to belong to the Reformatory and Progressive Class." This time, the effort evoked at least a few heartening responses. Several hundred people attended the Blackstone conference, where they were both edified by Ballou and other speakers and entertained by "the choir of the East Blackstone Inductive Communion, with their Seraphine, and numerous voluntary singers from Hopedale." 15

More heartening still was the growing interest in establishing communities like Hopedale. In December 1852, for instance, A. C. Church, a resident of Luzerne County in eastern Pennsylvania, asked for help in forming a community on the Hopedale model. Although Ballou refused to commit any of Hopedale's still meager resources to Church's plan, the request did help reanimate Ballou's old dream of a grand confederation of Practical Christian associations. "The day is coming," he wrote in the fall of 1853 regarding Church's project, "when such communities will be numbered in the hundreds and thousands." His enthusiasm was brought to a focus in February 1854 when the New York *Independent*, a leading reform journal, published an article, "Christian Colonies in the West," urging the formation of cooperative communities dedicated to building a
Christian civilization on the frontier. It seemed that the world was beginning to awaken to Hopedale and its Christian socialism. It was time for Practical Christians to redouble their own efforts, wrote Ballou, "thereby securing to ourselves and the Future, a Heaven on the Earth. . . . Socialism is yet to be the acknowledged orthodoxy of the world." 

Early in 1854 Ballou's longtime associate William Henry Fish began a series of articles in the *Practical Christian* entitled "Combined Industry and Co-operative Life" urging the reorganization of American society on the Hopedale model. Although Fish stressed the essential importance of Christianity, more notable was his emphasis on the virtues of cooperative social and economic organization. The critical weakness in American society, he said, was the pervasive isolation of individuals whether they lived in crowded cities or in rural areas, an isolation that prevented them from combining their physical, economic, and moral energies. If the sparsely populated areas of America could be transformed into "neighborhoods of fraternal cooperation," then the people would be able to combine their labor, talents, and possessions to provide themselves and their children with the benefits of urban life without the corruptions and miseries of cities. 

Events soon indicated that Fish's articles were part of a campaign to awakened popular interest in Practical Christian communities. In March Ballou submitted a plan for "a religious and civil confederacy" to the quarterly conference for its consideration. The plan proved to be too detailed for ready acceptance, and the conference adjourned its discussions until May. On 6 May Ballou's son-in-law, William Heywood, published a long article, "The Opening Future—Prospects and Plans," in which he predicted approval: "Then it will be important, and indispensable even, to have Agents and Missionaries . . . go up and down the earth to teach and preach . . . and thus multiply, strengthen, and confirm the disciples of the NEW SOCIAL ORDER." Finally on 1 July Ballou announced that the conference had approved the plan, thereby giving to "Christian Socialism a character, as a system, which it has never in form and to the world possessed." 

The essence of the plan was a constitution for a worldwide "Practical Christian Republic." In some basic respects, the new constitu-
tion resembled that of the earlier Fraternal Communion, par­
ticularly in its emphasis on nonresistance, temperance, abolitionism,
equality, and sexual purity, but it was notably grander and also
more abstract. Beyond the old moral code, it included twenty-four
cardinal principles of faith, formal articles of belief that suggest that
Ballou had drifted away from the inspiration of the Primitive
Church to a more formalistic view of religion. Although he in­
sisted that he was only presenting fundamental truths, the very ef­
fort to list articles of faith reflected some remoteness from the first
Christians, with their concrete time and place, and from his own
earlier religious experiences in the Mill River Valley.

This distance from the specific circumstances that had inspired
and sustained Hopedale was also evident in his master plan for a
“complete Social Superstructure, from foundations to pinnacle,” a
social contraption formed from three different kinds of communal
organizations: on the one extreme, “rural” communities consisting
of separate households and individually owned properties; at the
other extreme, common-stock communities practicing the commu­
nism that Daniel Lamson had once demanded; and in the broad
middle, communities, like Hopedale, holding their larger and more
public property on a joint-stock basis while allowing for individual
ownership of houses and other small properties. These communi­
ties were the building blocks for Ballou’s “complete Social Struc­
ture.” Two or more would combine to form a “communal munici­
pality,” and two or more municipalities would constitute a
“Communal State,” and two or more states would make up a “Com­
munal Nation”—all such nations forming the Practical Christian
Republic.

Although this was more a desktop utopia than an organization
rooted in real life, Ballou believed it could harmonize the interests
of millions of people and create a power strong enough to overcome
the selfishness of property. Infused with the governing spirit of
Christian nonresistance, the grand confederation of communities
would progressively remove “the partition walls which now divide
the numberless interests of everyday life” and eventually establish
a universal brotherhood of mankind. By their own initiatives, men
and women could achieve the Eden that God had intended for them:
You are to solve your own problem, and work out your own destiny. Therefore walk on your own feet; use your hands; eat your own bread; sit under your own vine and fig trees. Make your Republic religiously, morally, intellectually, socially, pecuniarily, peacefully and benevolently independent. . . . So shall your banner of truth, love and peace finally wave in serene majesty over every temple turret of regenerated humanity.²³

Even in the fullness of his enthusiasm, Ballou was too much the practical man to believe that the world would instantly rush to his door. The rich and the powerful could not be expected to abandon their positions, while the rest would be slow to recognize the promise of paradise. Whatever its successes, Hopedale remained too small a light to attract the world's wearied eyes. Ballou did believe, however, that he could at least begin a people's movement that would ultimately convert the world: "'Despise not the day of small things.' The Coral slowly builds a continent."²⁴ In order to direct small things to the great end, he gave much thought to publicizing his plan, particularly through a reorganized Practical Christian Communion, which was to "employ all available resources, mental, moral and pecuniary, in well directed efforts to disseminate the Principles and Polity of the Practical Christian Republic." He himself devoted much of his energies in 1854 to preparing what Heywood proclaimed in May to be "the great Work of its author's life." The result was Practical Christian Socialism, a 656-page volume that, when its printing was completed at Hopedale in November, he advertised for sale at $1.50 a copy either from himself or from Fowler and Wells, the New York publishers of reform works.²⁵

Ballou cast the entire work in the form of a "conversational exposition" between Inquirer, who raises the world's objections to Practical Christian socialism and asks various leading questions, and Expositor, who readily answers Inquirer. As Inquirer is all too easy to convince, the dialogue is no more than Ballou's puppet show, but at least it enabled the author to present his ideas in what he hoped would be a popular and readable form. The first 160 pages of the book discuss at length the fundamental principles of the Practical Christian Republic. This is followed by a longer section on the practical characteristics of his social system, more than half of
which is devoted to education and to love and sexuality. The long last section attempts to demonstrate the superiority of Practical Christian socialism over other radical social systems both religious and secular from Shakerism to Fourierism. Basically, Ballou believed he had found the way to resolve what for him and many others was becoming the leading social problem of their day, the use and abuse of property. The rapid and often frenzied progress of the 1850s was yielding great wealth but also great deprivation, an inequality in the human condition that a quarter of a century later Henry George would attempt to explain to his deeply troubled times in Progress and Poverty.

Ballou’s Christian socialism was grounded in the belief that while each person was entitled to the property earned by his own talents and labor, his use of property should be governed by his obligations to other human beings. By their natures, all men are social in that they depend on each other for their welfare; no individual has the capabilities needed for his own happiness. In 1849 Ballou had written:

The time has arrived when Christian Socialism must be proclaimed and insisted on. Mankind are becoming more and more social in the prominent interests. They are becoming more and more combined in organic social arrangements. Consequently social influences are becoming stronger in the formation of individual moral character. There never was a period in which the constitutional arrangements, laws, customs, usages, and general action of society did so much to make individuals virtuous or vicious, happy or miserable.

The great flaw in existing society was that it encouraged each person to believe that he could use his property simply for his own gratification and aggrandizement regardless of how it affected the welfare of others. The general solution, then, was to establish the social principle that all persons held their property only as “stewards in trust, under God,” with an unqualified obligation to use whatever was not required by their own basic needs for the improvement and happiness of other members of the human race. “We must magnify great Christian principles,” he wrote in 1850, “which will move the
minds of men to consecrate property to its true ends—employing it to reform, enlighten, redeem and bless the suffering classes."  

Ballou was aware that the idea of stewardship had failed in the past, but he was confident that his system of Christian socialism would make it effective. In part, the abuse of property would be restrained by the moral requirements of Practical Christianity: "Our strong moral prohibitions relative to intemperance, war, slavery, and other notoriously prolific evil customs will operate as strong safeguards."  

No saloons, cannons, or chains would waste wealth and destroy human happiness. Moreover, the joint-stock ownership of at least a part of the property would provide for some direct social management in the interests of the whole. And the temptation to abuse property in any form would be effectually controlled by two important provisions in his constitution of the Practical Christian Republic, each of which had been put into practice at Hopedale.

One provision limited the maximum wage or salary paid to any person to no more than that paid on average to "the first class of operatives," that is, skilled workers. Ballou believed that this would prevent the talented and powerful from using their superiorities to exact unjust gains, while it would also allow, below the maximum, for differential rewards based on actual work and contribution. By narrowing the gap between the best and worst paid, Ballou hoped to prevent the extremes of wealth that had destroyed the sense of fraternity and community in every other society. Ballou conceded that his communities sorely needed the talents of "the managing and professional classes," people accustomed to receiving large returns, but he hoped that at least some of them would apply their "skill and prowess" for the common good out of a sense of Christian duty. Although he admitted that many would not, he refused to budge on the maximum:

If we cannot enlist them by a fair conversion to our principles and policy, we must go without them, though it take a thousand years longer to reach our grand consumation. Of what use would it be to go through the long process of founding a new order of society, if when founded it should be radically like the present order, which impoverishes, degrades, and imbrutes five hundred families in order to enrich, elevate and refine one family?  

Ballou was equally insistent on the second provision, which limited what he saw as another source of social extremes—interest on loans, including dividends on investments. He accepted some level of interest as a natural and desirable element in a progressive modern economy; money had contributed to the general advance in wealth and should be rewarded. He believed, however, that the usual interest charged for money enabled the greedy few to exploit the labor of the great and productive many. He therefore insisted that interest rates be limited to the 4 percent already established at Hopedale. Eventually he hoped to eliminate the moneylenders entirely through the creation of a system of “Mutual Banking” in which the people would lend to each other at even lower rates, sufficient only to cover the costs of making the loan: “What a deliverance will it work from the covetousness and growing extortion of the existing Mammonish order!”

If such ideas seemed like provincial crank economics to the big-city financial world, they made sense to this member of the small-town middle class, the way to transform and redeem the only world he truly knew. And for him they had proved they could work. The grand scale of his book left little room for tiny Hopedale, which he called “an infantile and imperfect sample” lacking many features of the ideal community: “It has no Unitary Mansion, Bakery, Refectory, Baths or Laundry.” Whatever its deficiencies in details, however, Hopedale was a viable success that had outlived its supposed superiors, “a social Bethlehem, which though least among the Communities of Israel, would ultimately become the most illustrious.”

Ballou said that he limited the first printing of *Practical Christian Socialism* to 1,000 copies because he anticipated little initial interest in a book that did not “excite, dazzle, amuse or please the popular masses.” He did hope to attract the scattered few who aspired after a higher form of society, and thus to begin a popular movement. In advertising his book, he announced that having helped put Hopedale on a permanent basis, he planned “to advance into the great field of the world as a determined advocate of the *New Order of Society*,” employing lectures and writings not only to spread the gospel of Practical Christian socialism but also to encourage the founding of new communities. For five dollars anyone could receive
the book, along with other writings on the subject, enlistment in the Practical Christian Republic as an "inductive candidate," and information regarding suitable sites for a community. In combination with the newly reorganized Inductive Communion, Adin Ballou would enlighten the troubled conscience of his times and begin the regeneration of the world.

The contrast between this enthusiastic plan and its actual results was so extreme as to be ludicrous. Ballou's great work was largely ignored, even in the world of reform. One of the few periodicals that bothered to review the book—the Universalist Quarterly—distorted its meaning in order the better to condemn it. Eventually, the book did win the praise of John Humphrey Noyes, a rival religious leader and a careful student of attempted new orders of society, who said that "if it were our doom to attempt community-building by paper programme, we should choose Adin Ballou's scheme in preference to any thing we have ever been able to find," but even this rather snide praise came more than a decade after the book had fallen into oblivion.

Ballou's ambitious lecturing campaign also failed. In February 1855 he launched his new career as "an Advocate of the New Order of Society" in and around Hopedale and by June had extended his efforts into western Massachusetts, commencing at the village of Florence a few miles from Northampton. Since that village had developed out of the old Northampton Association with which Hopedale had cooperated during the heyday of Fourierism a decade before, he expected a positive response. Unfortunately, his small audiences there "would probably have been more interested in a puppet show or a mountebank exhibition than in my harangues about doing away with the ignorance, vice, poverty and misery of human society." He was less chagrined when he visited Connecticut in July but only because he expected less, having concluded that the Nutmeg State contained few of "the middle class of liberal religionists with high toned morals" on which he had come to depend. In the fall he spoke at Providence, Philadelphia, and New York City, moving from there to upstate New York. In December he ended his campaign in the familiar territory of northern Rhode Island, where he had been invited to speak by "a zealous Spiritualist and lover of
Practical Christianity." The year that was to actualize the Practical Christian Republic had simply vanished in the void of the world's indifference.

Ballou's disappointment, for a time, was partly palliated by a new enthusiasm that embraced him in 1855. Although he forced himself to leave Hopedale on his lecture tours, he was notably a homebody who in the past had resisted the thought, common among his fellow Yankees, of moving west to find a new life on the frontier. The decision to begin Hopedale on familiar territory among friends had proved to be the right one. But even Ballou was affected by the enthusiasm for western colonization that reached almost tidal proportions in New England by the mid 1850s. As early as 1852 he had begun to take an interest in the West, encouraged by letters from transplanted Yankees asking for support in civilizing the frontier. His personal interest was intensified when in the spring of 1854 he and Ebenezer Draper, along with their wives, had toured as far west as Cincinnati. This first exposure to western society had excited him to dream of a time when every "young man and woman in our Practical Christian Republic" would be afforded the opportunity to take a similar tour. A greater world than that of the Mill River Valley had begun to beckon.

The actual effort to establish a Practical Christian colony in the West, however, was less the work of Ballou than of William Henry Fish, who said in the fall of 1854 that he had long hoped "to have some of God's acres in the far West redeemed from the curses of present civilization." Two months earlier Fish had begun to urge quick action to acquire some western land for a colony, and soon a possible site was suggested by Mary J. Colburn, a member of the Hopedale Community and author of many of its hymns who had recently migrated to the Minnesota Territory: "If you value a fertile soil, healthy climate, and a society that knows how to appreciate the various means of moral and mental improvement, visit Minnesota." There was the usual problem of finding the money needed for colonization. Early in 1855 Fish began an effort to organize support from the people of the Mill Valley, only to discover that his nonresistance principles were not acceptable to many potential supporters. During the summer Ballou made a special visit to the wealthy abolitionist
Gerritt Smith in the hope of persuading him to support the venture; he managed to get five dollars.\textsuperscript{39}

The western project, however, had captured the imaginations of at least a few people at Hopedale. In May 1855 the \textit{Practical Christian} published an imaginary account of a future community called Expansia, named so because it had been the first effort to "expand the Practical Christian Republic beyond the original nucleus at Hopedale." By a fictitious 1889 this community had grown to some two thousand people inhabiting five thousand acres, one of nearly fifty communities constituting the ever-expanding Practical Christian Republic.\textsuperscript{40} Two months after the publication of this fantasy, Fish announced that some members of Hopedale were planning to visit Minnesota to look for a community domain, and in September the community officially delegated George O. Hatch and Elijah S. Mullikan, two new members, to carry out the mission. By the next month Ballou had drafted a constitution for the new community with the confidence "that the project will be actualized in a few months, or a few years at the farthest."\textsuperscript{41}

Unfortunately, bad timing ruined this adventure. Hatch and Mullikan got to Minnesota only to have their effort at settlement defeated by the onset of a harsh winter. They soon returned to Hopedale, unaware that a second small party, including John Lowell Heywood, the brother of Ballou's son-in-law, had followed in search of them. This party also was stopped by the winter, but it decided to remain in the territory. By May 1856 it reported that it had staked a claim to an extensive tract of land on both sides of the Crow River some sixty miles west of Minneapolis. The new pioneers called on those who were committed to Practical Christian socialism to join them in developing a settlement they called Union Grove. In a few years, however, this small colony broke up and most of its members returned to the East, ending forever the western movement of Practical Christian socialism.\textsuperscript{42}

By 1856 a great deal more had ended than the dream of the West. In fact, Ballou's entire hope for Practical Christianity had suffered a devastating blow at home from which it never recovered, a failure at least indirectly caused by his own changing interests. It is perhaps the general fate of religious movements born from local
conditions to suffer when the leaders who inspired them become preoccupied with larger worlds. The successful Perfectionist community at Oneida, for instance, was to collapse in 1880 after its aging leader, John Humphrey Noyes, had concentrated his attentions on what he called "American Socialism." Ballou had first risked this fate in 1852, when he stepped down as president of the Hopedale Community, and he deepened the risk by developing his outside interests in the Practical Christian Republic and spiritualism. He convinced himself that he and his followers had found a way to create a community that could stand by itself without his continued inspiration and direction; if that were not so, then there could be no hope for the Practical Christian Republic.

Ballou's experiment seemed to work. After 1852 Hopedale had prospered, entering by 1854 into what Ballou later called the "palmiest" period in its history: "It thrrove in all its departments. . . . Materially, socially, and religiously."43 Indeed, it was raised to new heights of glory in the mid 1850s—only to collapse abruptly into the dust of a shattered dream.