The Civil War drastically reoriented the reform culture that had originated and sustained Practical Christianity, but even under the new conditions some of the tradition of moral commitment and religious radicalism survived at Hopedale. Throughout the conflict, the community sustained some of its old strivings for moral and mental culture. In 1861 Ballou had initiated a series of weekly "inductive conferences" as a means of moral and religious improvement. To guide this conference and the hundreds more that he hoped would be initiated elsewhere, he published in 1862 an elaborate *Monitorial Guide* that detailed fifty-two weekly exercises that he believed would prepare the members of the inductive conferences to be citizens of his Practical Christian Republic. "Advanced minds delight in method, order, system, harmony, and the fitness of things," he explained. "Chaos, confusion, incoherence, discord and uncouthness belong to crude and low development."¹

During the chaos and incoherence of war, his followers intensified their strivings for self-improvement. Besides the inductive conferences and their normal religious meetings, they held temperance festivals and educational lectures. In the winter of 1861–62, for instance, the young people of the community gave a series of lectures on such subjects as "Women" and "Moral Beauty." And their interest in physical improvement found a new outlet in 1864 when Amelia Chapman, a daughter of the chemical wizard, began a brief "School of Light Gymnastics" where some of them learned to keep their bodies in trim. They also continued their music through the Hopedale Musical Society and the Hopedale choir, which gave several concerts in and around the village; in late 1865 a new and
harsher note was added when William F. Draper and other returning war veterans formed a brass band.²

The community also retained its old holidays. Until the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, it continued on 1 August to celebrate with music, speeches, and "pic-nics" the abolition of slavery in the British West Indies, as abolitionists had done for more than two decades. Above all, it clung to its Christmas celebration, perhaps the more tenaciously because of the war. In 1863, after religious services, the community met in Hopedale's Social Hall, where in front of a mammoth Christmas tree presents were distributed among the members; from the ceiling were lowered boxes "laden with all manner of indescribable gifts" and bearing such messages as "Remember the Poor" and "Little Things for Little Folks." Significantly, the gifts were publicly reported as having a value of between $1,500 and $2,000. The dollar sign reappeared at a later Christmas, when it was reported that some gifts were worth as much as $200—amid old customs, a sign of changing times, as was the appearance of General Draper and his brass band at the 1865 celebration.³

The community was generous with others as well as itself. In early 1863, for instance, the Hopedale sewing circle began to make articles of clothing for the freed slaves around Port Royal, and in October 1864 some of the residents organized the Hopedale Freedman's Relief Society with Ebenezer Draper as president. Early in 1865 the society sent Sarah P. Lillie, a daughter of one of the original members of the community, to South Carolina as a teacher for the freedmen, and in 1866 it raised nearly five hundred dollars to support another Hopedale teacher, Ellen M. Patrick, the daughter of Delano Patrick, to help educate black people in the Charleston area.⁴

More than a glimmer of social radicalism survived in the village, at least among a small group of "progressives" headed by Bryan Butts and Harriet Greene. In late 1860 they had formed the Hopedale Progressive Group to hold weekly meetings for "free Social, Spiritual and Scientific communication" with the aim of "improvement—not amusement." Over the next several years the group helped support the Butts-Greene monthly, renamed the Progressive Age in 1862. It also began to take an interest in the plight of northern labor, particularly the lot of poor working women. By the end of the war, it was
supporting the efforts of one of its members, Ira Steward, to promote the interests of labor. As secretary of the Boston Labor Reform Association, Steward, a machinist, helped originate the movement for an eight-hour workday, a movement that the Hopedale radicals supported with meetings at nearby Milford. Steward's radical concerns led him in 1878 to help found the International Workingmen's Association, one of the first Marxian organizations in the United States.5

After the war the title of the Butts-Greene monthly was changed to the Modern Age, and the progressive group was reconstituted as the Hopedale Social Science Association. At least occasionally, the Modern Age adopted an anticapitalist stance. In 1865, for instance, one of its articles, written perhaps by Butts, declared that capital had usurped a corrupting power, "the power of capital is the power of matter over mind," and warned that there could be no peace until labor learned how to control capital. Butts also reprinted his charge, first made at the Boston peace convention, that the Civil War was partly the work of "the State Street monopoly and the Fifth Avenue aristocracy which despises the claims of northern labor." At the convention and elsewhere, he declared that it was useless to cry for peace without eliminating the gap that separated the classes. As a practical measure, the progressives called for the eight-hour workday to free workers from excessive toil and to give them the time to think and to make decisions for themselves. On "the battlefield of today," such matters had to be decided in favor of labor if there was to be social peace.6

In general, according to the Hopedale progressives, there would be harmony in society only when the strong recognized the rights of the weak. The Modern Age gave special support to the feminist movement. It advocated shorter working hours, more equitable pay, and greater opportunity for women. It also urged that women be given the right to vote, and in early 1866 published a petition in favor of "universal suffrage" which it hoped would be sent to Washington, D.C., from every town and hamlet in the country. The commitment to women's issues was given a boost in late 1865 when the monthly inherited the subscribers of the defunct Woman's Journal, leading Greene to begin a "Woman's Journal" column, which replaced her monthly "Home Letters" on affairs at Hopedale.
Both Harriet Greene and Bryan Butts were driven by the moral ethic of Hopedale’s reform culture. Regarding social evils, Greene summed up this ethic when she wrote: “‘Work! Work for the elevation of mankind!’ is the language that ever comes from the bending heaven to every listening ear.” The reformer, wrote Butts, “is the moral giant in an age of dwarfs.” But eventually the work of sustaining the Modern Age while writing and lecturing on reform subjects proved to be too much, and in June 1866 the two announced that they were suspending publication: “The demand for rest—mental and physical—is imperative.” They promised to resume the following year, but they did not, breaking a string of reform periodicals that extended back thirty-five years to Ballou’s Independent Messenger.7

The Hopedale Social Science Association survived only a little longer, but for a time it was active enough to express some of the newness of the changing times. The association had been organized with the intention of investigating “the operating causes and scientific remedies for the evils and inharmonies of our social state.” Its general faith was summed up in the first article Butts chose to publish in his new journal. While conceding free will to individuals, the author argued that human acts “collectively conform to laws scarcely less rigorous than that of gravitation,” since individual differences were neutralized in the mass in favor of a uniform behavior. The salvation of society, then, depended on an understanding of the laws governing its collective behavior. Although Butts and the others did not entirely ignore moralistic reform, they held that reform itself had to be reformed along the lines of the new social science and the material influences on human behavior. Typically, when Butts chose to argue against war, he condemned it not only as immoral but as disruptive of “those laws of material production by which is secured the greatest accumulation with the least waste.”8 The salvation of the world lay more in scientific knowledge than in moral commitment.

Ballou appeared at least once before the local Social Science Association, but it is doubtful whether he shared its general outlook. He revealed his attitude toward the new mentality in 1867 when he gave a long lecture at Hopedale on the subject “Human Progress in Respect to Religion.” In some ways, he was impressed by the new
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times: “Our age is eminently an age of movement and revolution, both ideally and actually. It is one of great mental energy—great discoveries, inventions, and enterprise.” As in the past, he found some hope in the prospect that change would weaken the grip of corrupting conventions, but now he expressed particular concern over the direction influential thinkers and “professed progressionists” were taking, one that was leading “large numbers of people to dispense with the specialties and personal responsibilities of religion.”

What troubled him most was the erosion of belief in moral responsibility to a higher authority: “Without an active conscientiousness, man will be merely an intelligent animal. Without an acknowledged God, a divine authority, he could feel no higher obligation than to himself.” He especially regretted the indifference among progressives to the moral philosophy of Jesus, for him unexcelled by any other philosophy. Under the influence of the dominating war spirit, even those who dedicated themselves to social justice lacked the self-sacrificing commitment to brotherhood associated with nonresistance. The result was “egotism, antagonism, and discordancy,” which would forever defeat even the highest aspirations for humanity. In part, he attributed the problem to spiritualism, many of whose votaries had become, as he said later, “undisguisedly anti-Christian,” but he blamed them less than he did the guardians of the Christian religion who had rendered their faith odious to the progressing world by their indifference to “social justice, and what may be called civil, legal, and commercial righteousness,” a betrayal of true Christianity.9

Ballou made one last great effort to educate the world in the essential truths of Christianity and its place in the world. Between 1869 and 1872 he gave a long series of lectures at Hopedale which were eventually published in three volumes under the title Primitive Christianity and Its Corruptions. The religion taught and exemplified by Jesus, he said, had been radically corrupted during the first centuries of its existence and remained so to his own times: many people believe “that is Christianity which passes for Christianity. . . . But intelligent and thorough investigators know better, and it is time that the common people should be better informed.”10
pect of Christianity, including its theology and ecclesiastical arrangements, but he gave special attention to its practical social implications.

In one lecture, for instance, he again considered one of the great questions of the age, the relationship of property to human welfare. Although he described himself as "a decided Associationist," he said that Jesus had not condemned private property, leaving it open whether men would own their property individually or collectively. What was important was that property owners accept their divine obligation to use their wealth for moral and social good. Excessive wealth, he warned, was morally dangerous to the possessor and oppressive to the poor; better, then, that the rich donate their unneeded wealth to the welfare of the poor. As a proper basis for the disposition of property, he proposed a rule reminiscent of the better days of Hopedale:

Never to appropriate to one's self, family, dependent, or personal favorites for exclusive use or consumption, more property in the aggregate than would be each individual's average equitable share if all mankind were ordering their lives by the teaching and example of the Man of Nazareth.11

It was a rather tedious way to apply the Sermon on the Mount, but Ballou deeply believed that this one simple rule could redeem the world from poverty, misery, and crime.

*Primitive Christianity and Its Corruptions* was not only a mellowed summary of Practical Christianity but also a melancholy farewell. By 1870 the last hope for the survival of the old community had vanished. As early as 1861 the annual meeting had considered the question "shall we abandon the community organization," but it was decided to continue, in part as a protest against the war. In 1868, however, confronted with a dwindling membership and a growing population of strangers in the village, the Hopedale Community abandoned what little authority it had and voted to extinguish itself, establishing in its place the Hopedale Parish, a liberal Christian society loosely affiliated with Unitarianism. The community was survived for a few years by its Board of Trustees, but the trustees were maintained only to supervise the disposition of such
bits of property as the books of the old library, which were "loaned" to the local Mechanics Library in 1871.12

What had once been a miniature Christian commonwealth intended to usher in the future millennium had become a part of history. One by one, its remaining members disappeared. In 1865 Dudley Chapman made one last appearance on the village scene as the manufacturer of "Abraham's Union Burning Gas," which he advertised as a highly advantageous substitute for kerosene, but in the same year his wife died and the wizard of practical chemistry moved back to his native Connecticut. In 1870 Anna Thwing Draper, Ebenezer's wife and a pillar of the old community, died of breast cancer at age fifty-five, and soon after her husband moved to Boston, where he failed in his last business venture. By 1876 only fourteen members of the community remained at Hopedale. Ballou served as pastor of the Hopedale Parish until 1880, when he retired on a pension contributed chiefly by the Draper family. His last significant communal act was in 1886 when he supported—reluctantly some said—a petition by the Draper family to incorporate Hopedale as a town separate from Milford. This separation from outside authority completed the family's control over the village, finalizing the conquest begun thirty years before.

By then radicalism, old or new, had vanished from the town. After the termination of the Modern Age in 1866, Butts had struggled on into the 1870s, printing his wife's moralistic tales for the young and advertising that he was (1) holding a small private school where young men and women could learn the printing trade, (2) offering a course in "vocal gymnastics, cure for stammering, lung disease, etc.," and (3) willing to assist both authors and publishers in the preparation of manuscripts for publication. Harriet Greene died at Hopedale in 1881, ending more than three decades of active feminism in the village, and Butts had departed for other places by the mid 1880s.13

In the early 1870s Ballou turned his attention to writing the history of the expired community both to enshrine its memory and to preserve its experience for the use of future generations. Although the book occasionally omitted or slanted some facts, it was decent, truthful history without spite toward anyone and with pride in his
followers and their achievement. They were not, he wrote, foolish visionaries but "a busy, thrifty self-sufficing class of people" who had transformed a dream into an economic success. From first to last, they had paid their debts, a better record than most American business enterprises, and all who had participated in the community had gained materially as well as morally."

Yet it had failed. Why? Having determined to answer that question, Ballou had to deal with the Drapers. They had, he conceded, precipitated the crisis, but he denied the charges of critics that they were guilty of treachery or even of any notable act of selfishness; he could not "count them sinners above others in the money-making, money-seeking world." At the time he had deplored their action, but in the end he had been moved to accept it by his commitment to the "inherent and indefeasible rights" of all members to determine their own actions and the use of their property; then as always, the right of private judgment and individual responsibility remained the cornerstone of his social faith.

Ballou might have judged the Drapers for the way they exercised their rights, but this he refused to do. Instead, he blended their failings into the more essential failings of people in general. The community, he said, would eventually have broken down anyway, because its members lacked the Christlike mind and heart needed for them to live together "on terms of equality, fraternal co-operation, and mutual good feelings." It was not that they were notably weak—on the contrary they were as well equipped in character as any group—but that not even they had been able to escape the general culture of their times, one that left people in general "too ego-tistical, angular, opinionated, mercenary, combative, belligerent" for any communal life. They could meet as neighbors and associates; they could not live as brothers and sisters. And there was, in retrospect, no chance that they would have been raised to a higher moral and spiritual plane in the future, because the "prevailing currents of society" at mid century were in "the direction of wealth, of political preferment, of fashionable display, of easy-going morality and religion."'

Why was society seemingly conspiring against the better side of man's nature? For his explanation, Ballou returned to his starting point, to his unswerving conviction that the fault lay in a corrupted
Christianity that had left its followers with "no lofty, sublime, inspiring ideal of the reign of righteous brotherhood, love, peace, and joy on the earth." While they preached the joys of Christian heaven, the churches had accepted a subservience to a world of violence and war, of inequality and exploitation:

One may laud Christ to the skies . . . , but must not follow him too closely or apply his teachings too rigidly in matters pertaining to the acquisition and use of property, method of trade, the wage system, the relations between capital and labor, treatment of the criminal and perishing classes, caste distinctions, and concerns of kindred nature.\(^{17}\)

If the corrupted world was served by a corrupted church, what then? By the 1870s the spiritual revolution of forty years before had largely exhausted itself, and the hope of regenerating Christianity through such individual action as had produced Hopedale had faded before the new forces of industrial society. What then?

Ballou could do no more than look to some distant future, when a divinely ordained progress would finally have prepared humanity for the golden day. Only then would people be ready to understand the meaning of Hopedale. It was apparently for this reason that he did not publish his *History of the Hopedale Community*, leaving it in manuscript with instructions for its publication after his death. When the world was prepared for change, then would the book have its effect: "The great question involved in our Hopedale experiment is not yet settled; only postponed to a wiser and better time." Ultimately, Hopedale would give confidence and direction to those who dared to make Christianity the church of Christlike practice. In the concluding sentences of his book, Ballou reaffirmed his expectation that the good time would come:

Then will unrighteousness be done away, unkindness, hatred, wrath and war will be unknown, and every unhallowed usage, custom, institution be abolished; the reign of justice, love, brotherhood, peace, will be established, men will dwell together as one great family in harmony and happiness, and God even in this world will "be all in all."\(^{18}\)

Ballou completed his manuscript in August 1876 and closed the book on the subject of Practical Christianity. Although he was to
write three books in the future, they dealt with different matters: the history of the town of Milford, the genealogy of the Ballou family, and his general autobiography. Despite his disappointments, these were not unpleasant years. He could take much pride and comfort in living in the midst of a practical success, the one his faith had initiated on the banks of the Mill River, "along whose intervale," he wrote in 1875, "the pleasant village of Hopedale is extending its bright array of machine-shops and homes." By then the village had grown to nearly a hundred homes and over six hundred people, a "beautiful and cheerful" place that grew more prosperous year by year. Ballou took special pride in its industrial vitality, calling it "a seminary of inventors, and may now, without extravagance be called a miniature university of ingenious patent-lore." If most of the physical village belonged to George Draper, its birth belonged to Adin Ballou.

Despite his many writings, Ballou was largely ignored even in his native region. Long before, he had been dismissed by Emerson and his coterie of intellectuals as someone of no importance; while Concord had memorialized Brook Farm and even the ridiculous Fruitlands, it said nothing about Hopedale. In 1889 Ballou received some distant recognition when Leo Tolstoy, the Russian novelist and reformer, proclaimed him "one of the first true apostles of the 'New Time'" and had two of his tracts on nonresistance translated into Russian. Even this was bittersweet, however, since Tolstoy criticized him for compromising nonresistance by allowing for the physical restraint of violent drunkards and madmen; the apostle of Practical Christianity was not pleased to be told that the true Christian should be willing to be killed rather than to limit anyone's freedom.

On the whole, though, Ballou was content to believe that his true recognition would come after his death. By 1889 he was eighty-six, nearing the end of a long lifetime. In 1887 both George and Ebenezer Draper died, each from a kidney disease. Ballou may have taken some secret satisfaction from the death of George Draper, but the loss of his old nemesis and benefactor was one more sign of the passing of his age.

By July 1890 Ballou's hand had grown too weak for him to continue writing his autobiography. The last words in his own hand
dealt with the annual four-hundred-dollar pension from the Draper family and with his earnings from his ministrations at weddings and funerals. He cited this success in achieving a competence as evidence of “the good providence of my heavenly father.” It fulfilled not only the assurances of Christ but “the promise repeatedly made to me in moments of deep despondency and gloom by the voice of the Spirit speaking to my inner consciousness and saying ‘I will never leave nor forsake thee.’” He was prepared to meet his maker.

On 5 August the old man reached back to his past one last time, asking his daughter, Abbie, to read to him some of his favorite passages from the Bible and also his own account of the “profoundly impressive” vision that the spiritualist Thomas Lake Harris had revealed to him in 1856. Within hours of that reading, he had himself passed to the world of the spirits to rejoin his three sons.22

There were plenty of eulogies at his funeral, but the one that caught the most attention was from his own pen. Having presided over obsequies for hundreds of others during his long career, it had occurred to him to prepare a sermon about himself to serve as his last testament. Most of the long sermon expressed his lifelong dedication to the practice as well as the preaching of Christ’s ideals: “With me, his thoughts were God’s thoughts, his will God’s will.” Again, he took note of the failure at Hopedale, but he expressed the hope that eventually his cherished ideals would be “realized in their highest excellence on earth by devoted disciples.” He spoke with even greater confidence than before:

I have left the world under a very strong impression from Heaven that a regenerate Christlike form of the church will erelong be devoted to prosecute this work, and now leave you a solemn prophecy that the coming century will witness a glorious practical consumation of the cardinal principles in behalf of which God made it my high privilege to bear testimony.23

By the year of his death only a handful of the two hundred people who had participated in the Hopedale experiment remained alive; Lucy Ballou, his helpmate for half a century, died less than two years later, leaving only two of the original members of the community, William Henry Fish and William W. Cook, still living. Ballou might have found some comfort in the efforts of a new genera-
tion to carry on the cause. The years after 1890 saw the emergence of small but promising movements for both Christian socialism and peace. His son-in-law carried the cause of peace into the twentieth century. While serving as a minister in Dorchester, Heywood spoke out against the growing militarism of his times and, in 1910, republished Ballou's book *Christian Non-Resistance* in support of a revitalized Universal Peace Union.²⁴

This new age of hope, however, gave way after 1914 to an age of war. When Ballou's daughter, Abbie Heywood, died in June 1918, a minister at Hopedale observed that she had "lived to see what her father could not, with all his prophetic power have dreamed—a planet writhing in the agonies of a warfare such as no great Milton could have described."²⁵ In these new times the nineteenth-century hopes for moral progress died, perhaps never to be reborn. After night, there came a very different day.