

**SERMONS ON IMPORTANT
DOCTRINAL SUBJECTS:
WITH CRITICAL AND
EXPLANATORY NOTES**

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Sermons on Important Doctrinal Subjects: With Critical and Explanatory Notes by Hosea Ballou

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HOSEA BALLOU

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ON IMPORTANT

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WITH

CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY NOTES.

BY

REV. HOSEA BALLOU.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

The discourses contained in this volume were delivered in the city of Philadelphia, during the two last weeks in December, 1821, and the first week in January, 1822. Rev. Hosea Ballou, their author, had been invited to that city by the Universalist society there; and during his short stay the number of his hearers increased so that, at the last service, it was supposed there were not far from seven thousand people.

The sermons were taken down by a stenographer at the time of delivery. The author had not the opportunity of revising and correcting the sheets before they went to press; otherwise some of his arguments might have been more full, and the language, in many cases, different. The stenographer, however, flattered himself that he had presented the discourses "*totidem verbis*;" but in this, doubtless, he was too sanguine.

The first edition of these sermons was published by Mr. Edwin T. Scott, in the year 1822. The style in which they were written was exceedingly bad. We have endeavored to improve them in this respect, although we have not bestowed upon them all that alteration which, under circumstances of more leisure, we should have been glad to have done.

In regard to the character of the sermons, we have a word to say. They are all on *important doctrinal* subjects. No Universalist can read them without feeling a deep and lively interest in the matter before him. They are distinguished by a patient reflection, originality of conception, closeness of reasoning, and pungency of application. The degrading and contradictory doctrines of the Orthodox creed are exposed, and utterly refuted. The love of God, as manifested in the great plan of salvation, which is calculated to produce in man a moral conformity to the divine nature, is set forth, particularly in the sermons entitled "God's Mindfulness of Man," "Characteristics of the Gospel," and "God's Uncaused Love to Men." We flatter ourselves, and we trust not without reason, that the circulation of this volume will confirm and strengthen the faith of Universalists, bring many to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, and impart joy and consolation to all.

The Notes will, we have no doubt, be considered a useful supplement to the work. A part of them were appended to the first edition by a gentleman who superintended its publication; but they have been retrenched in some parts, and enlarged in others.

We are happy to close our remarks in this place by observing that, with unimpaired energies, he continues to discharge his duties as pastor of the Second Universalist Society in this city, besides other arduous labors; and that the present state of his health is such as to justify the hope that his usefulness will be continued yet for a long time.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

WE need not here recapitulate the facts contained in the preface to the edition of 1832. The work has been for a long time out of print, and many inquiries have been made for it. The venerable author never produced poor sermons. There is a peculiar originality in all he wrote. He was no copyist; he followed no author, in the matter of his sermons, except the sacred writers. He preached much on the character and attributes of God; on God's care of men; on the perfection of God's law; on the power of Christian faith; on the character of Jesus, as the sent of God and the Saviour of the world; on his divine mission, devotion, knowledge, power and success; on the nature of pure religion; on the punishment of sin; on the scriptural doctrine of judgment; on life and immortality, &c. &c.;— and on all these subjects he spoke with a clearness and force of argument that carried conviction to the minds of all unprejudiced believers.

At the moment of putting this edition to the press, the long, laborious, useful, Christian life of the author of the sermons was closed. He died on the seventh of June, 1852, after an illness of only six days.

THOMAS WHITTEMORE.

JUNE 12, 1852.

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