

**AN EXAMINATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF
FUTURE RETRIBUTION: IN CONNECTION
WITH THE MORAL NATURE OF MAN, THE
PRINCIPLE OF ANALOGY, AND THE
SACRED SCRIPTURES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649054732

An Examination of the Doctrine of Future Retribution: In Connection with the Moral Nature of Man, the Principle of Analogy, and the Sacred Scriptures by Hosea Ballou

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY JAMES M. USHER.
37 Cornhill.
1852.

BT
836
iB23
1852
Exp. 7

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1846, by
THOMAS WHITTEMORE,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of
Massachusetts.

Stereotyped by
GEORGE A. CURTIS;
NEW ENGLAND TYPE AND STEREOTYPE FOUNDRY.

1430
25-1

DEDICATION.

FROM numerous considerations, which have made a deep and lasting impression on his mind, the author of this work is induced, most respectfully and affectionately, to inscribe it to the SECOND UNIVERSALIST SOCIETY IN BOSTON, to which it has been his happiness, for many years, to minister.

H. BALLOU

Boston, March 30th, 1834.

NOTE.

The division of this work into chapters, the titles affixed to the paragraphs, the table of contents, the index, and the foot notes, are to be attributed to Thomas Whittemore.

P R E F A C E .

A PART of what is contained in the following work has been before published in the Universalist Expositor. But as that work never had a very extensive circulation, the author had a desire of bringing his views on the subject treated on, more extensively before the public, and that in a treatise by itself; by which means it might be more likely to become a subject of general consideration and investigation.

The whole, as it is now embodied, will make the reader pretty well acquainted with the views of the author, on the general subject, and the principles on which he founds them.

If the views maintained in the following essay are any more in accordance with truth, than those doctrines which oppose them, there is every good reason for laying them before the public, which can be required for so doing. We cannot allow that truth ought not to be advanced if it conflict with long established opinions, and tend

to give offence to pious persons, who have long been established in the popular doctrines of the day. If we consent to such argument, we thereby pass censure on that Divine Teacher, who warned his disciples to beware of the doctrines of the Scribes and Pharisees; and not only do we thereby charge him with fault, but justify his revilers and persecutors. In so doing we should take the position occupied by those, in our Saviour's time, who shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; and who would neither enter themselves, nor suffer others so to do.

If the master spirits who led in the reformation, in the sixteenth century, had yielded to the fear of giving offence to a church which was imbued with error and corruption, the moral darkness which characterized that age might have continued a protracted night; and the benign light, which has made such salutary advances, might have been excluded from the Christian world.

Whatever may be said to justify Galileo for abjuring the Copernican system, when his life was menaced, the same could not be urged in extenuation of the impropriety of withholding important truth from society, in times which are not disgraced with offices of inquisition.

Should the reader object to the foregoing remarks, as giving any countenance to the publishing of doctrine so erroneous as he may believe is maintained in the following pages, he is reminded that such an objection constitutes himself as odious an inquisition as ever was nourished in the bosom of popery. The times in which we live, and the happy government which guarantees and defends the right of every individual in community, not only justify the honest confession of our religious sentiments, but call on us to discharge such a duty. In addition to this call, a paramount one is recognized from truth itself. To this call the writer of the following essay has been conscientiously devoted for more than forty years; and he has endeavored faithfully to discharge the duties which it embraced, notwithstanding the many painful conflicts through which they have carried him. Not that he would boast of having advanced nothing but truth; for experience has often enforced on his mind the truth of the maxim, that "to err is human." But such experience has been useful; as by exposing his mistakes to the investigation of stronger and more enlightened minds, they have been corrected. One consolation he has constantly enjoyed, in