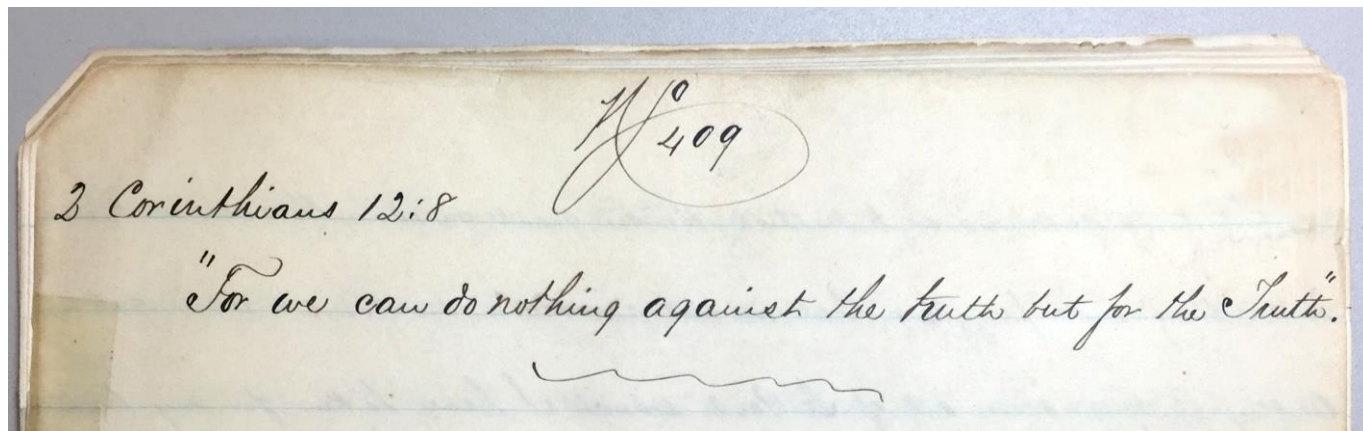


The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries,
Union Theological Seminary, New York

Union Theological Seminary Archives 1

Finding Aid for

Phillips Brooks Papers, 1872; 1958



Sermon on II Corinthians 12:8, 1872. Credit to: UTS1: Phillips Brooks Papers, 1872; 1958, box 1, folder 1, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Finding Aid prepared by: Katherine Palm, February 2015
With financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation

Summary Information

Creator: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893
Title: Phillips Brooks Papers, 1872; 1958
Dates: 1872; 1958
Abstract: Episcopal clergyman of Boston. Collection consists of two manifestations of his sermon entitled "For We Can Do Nothing against the Truth but for the Truth, based on II Corinthians 12:8": a manuscript with pencil emendations dated 1872 and a typed copy dated 1958.
Size: 1 box, 0.25 linear feet
Storage: Onsite storage
Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Email: burkearchives@library.columbia.edu

Administrative Information

- Provenance:** The papers are part of the Union Theological Seminary Archives, which comprises institutional and administrative records of the Seminary, combined with the papers of many organizations, scholars, pastors, laypersons, and others connected with the school. The materials in this collection were part of a large group of unprocessed material that was organized in 2015. The manuscript sermon was donated by Gertrude Brooks, a niece of Phillips Brooks, through Henry Sloane Coffin in 1929.
- Access:** Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to burkearchives@library.columbia.edu, or by postal mail to The Burke Library address on page 1, as far in advance as possible. [Burke Library staff](#) is available for inquiries or to request a consultation on archival or special collections research.
- Access Restrictions:** The collection is unrestricted to readers. Certain materials, however, are in a fragile condition, and this may necessitate restriction in handling and copying.
- Preferred Citation:** Item description, UTS1: Phillips Brooks Papers, 1872; 1958, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Biography

Phillips Brooks was born in Boston, Massachusetts on December 13, 1835. After a brief stint teaching school, Brooks pursued a religious calling, serving congregations in Philadelphia and then Boston, eventually becoming one of the most famous preachers of his time and representative of the Episcopalian “broad-church tradition.” He is also well-known as having written the words to the carol “O Little Town of Bethlehem” in 1867.

His parents were William Gray Brooks, a lineal descendant of the Reverend John Cotton, and Mary Ann Phillips, a member of the prominent Phillips family, which had in prior generations included several Puritan ministers and a Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts. Brooks had five brothers, one of whom perished in the Civil War, another of whom went into trade, and three of whom who became clergyman.

Brooks was baptized in Boston’s First Church as a Unitarian Congregationalist, but, following the family’s removal to St. Paul’s Church on Tremont Street, was reared in the Episcopalian faith. He completed his early education at the Boston Latin School and went on to Harvard College, from which he graduated in 1855.

In September 1855, Brooks returned as an usher to teach at Boston Latin School, where he remained only until February 1856. Changing course, he matriculated at Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Virginia, residing there for three years, during a period of rising tensions leading up to the Civil War.

Following ordination on July 1, 1859, he began his first rectorship at the Church of the Advent in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was next called to the Holy Trinity Church, also of Philadelphia, where he served from 1862 to 1869. In connection with his rectorship there, Brooks became an overseer of the newly established Philadelphia Divinity School. During the war his sermons touched upon issues of national import, and were sometimes of a then-controversial nature, such as his Thanksgiving sermon of 1864, in which he argued for suffrage for all freedmen.

In October 1869, Brooks returned to Boston as Rector of Trinity Church. He also took on other roles in the wider community. In 1870, he was elected as an overseer of Harvard College. The following year Brooks was appointed to the State Board of Education and became a member of the Examining Committee of the Boston Public Library. In 1874, as a member of its Central Committee, he helped choose topics and speakers for the inaugural American Church Congress.

The published works of Brooks include his Lectures on Preaching (given at Yale College in 1877) and several volumes of sermons.

Over the course of his career, a number of institutions sought, unsuccessfully, to recruit Brooks to their ranks: to serve as President at Kenyon College in Ohio, to chair Church History at the Philadelphia Divinity School, and as Provost at the University of Pennsylvania. The invitation to become preacher and professor of Christian Ethics at Harvard in the spring of 1881 was also eventually turned down; though Brooks went on to participate as one of a body of clergyman who took turns performing the duties on a rotating basis. In 1886, he was declined the honor of assistant Bishop of Pennsylvania. Brooks also received a number of honorary Doctor of Divinity degrees, including from Harvard University, Columbia College, and Oxford University.

In his later years, Brooks made several voyages abroad, visiting Europe and Asia, and spending particular time in England, where he preached in Westminster Abbey and before Queen Victoria. In 1891, he was elected Bishop of Massachusetts, although his tenure was brief, as on January 23, 1893 he succumbed to a short illness after serving for only a few months.

Brooks never married and was survived by two of his brothers. He was buried in Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Sources:

- Allen, Alexander V.G. 1907. *Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893; Memories of His Life with Extracts from his Letters and Note-Books*. New York: E.P. Dutton & Company.
- Harrison, Frederick G. 1993. *Biographical Sketches of Preeminent Americans*. Vol. 4. Boston: E.W. Walker.
- Queen II, Edward L., Stephen R. Prothero, and Gardiner H. Shattuck, Jr., eds. 2009. *Encyclopedia of American Religious History*. New York: Facts on File.

Collection Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of one manuscript (1872) and one typewritten copy (1958) of Brooks's sermon entitled "For We Can Do Nothing against the Truth but for the Truth, based on II Corinthians 12:8." The manuscript includes pencil emendations and the typewritten copy includes text indicating that it was typed for the Reverend Bayard Clark, St. Bartholomew's Church, Nashville, Tennessee.

Processing

Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes.

Further Sources

Harvard University holds a number of collections relating to Phillips Brooks, both in its University Archives and its Houghton Library. These collections include sermons and lectures, such as those described in the finding aid accessible at <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL.Hough:h001273>, and family papers, such as those described in the finding aid accessible at <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL.Hough:h00459>.

Contents list

Box	Folder	Contents
1	1	Sermon on II Corinthians 12:8, 1872
1	2	Sermon on II Corinthians 12:8, 1958