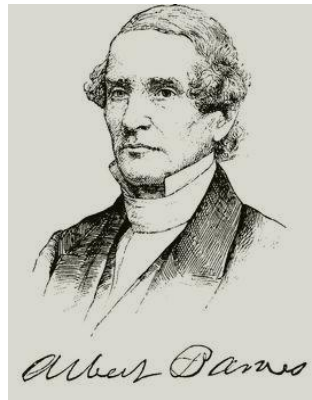


**The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary
Columbia University in the City of New York**

Union Theological Seminary Archives 1

Finding Aid for

Albert Barnes Papers, 1840 – 1859



Finding Aid prepared by: Lisa Fishman 1997; revised by Ruth Tonkiss Cameron 2008

Summary Information

Creator: Albert Barnes, 1798 - 1870
Title: Albert Barnes Papers, 1840-1859
Inclusive dates: 1840 -1859
Bulk dates: 1846 -1850
Abstract: Presbyterian Pastor involved in the New School/Old School dispute, whose experience influenced the founding of Union Theological Seminary in New York. Member of the Board of Directors of UTS, 1840 - 1870: Contains 29 Sermons.
Size: 1 box, 0.50 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:** George Lewis Prentiss donated Barnes' sermons to The Burke Library before 1897, having received them from Fanny M. Gibbs. Albert Barnes had been persuaded by Fanny M. Gibbs to give her these remaining sermons, when she discovered that he was destroying his whole collection. (See quotation below).
- 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: Albert Barnes Papers, [1840 - 1870?], box #, folder, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York

Biography

Rev. Albert Barnes was born in Rome, Oneida County, New York on Dec. 1, 1798.

He completed preparatory studies at Fairfield Academy, Connecticut, and graduated from Hamilton College in July 1820. After attending Princeton Theological Seminary, he was ordained on Feb. 8, 1825, and installed as pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Morristown, NJ. Five years later, Barnes succeeded the Rev. James Patriot Wilson as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. For many years he preached and wrote in the First Church, remarking, "Whatever I have accomplished in the way of commentary on the Scriptures is to be traced to the fact of rising at four in the morning" (Prentiss p.165).

The division within the Presbyterian denomination between the "Old School" and the "New School" resulted in a struggle for control of the church, and in 1831 a heresy charge by the Presbytery of Philadelphia against Barnes went before the General Assembly. Barnes's call was sustained by a New School majority, but in 1835 the publication of his new commentary on Romans resulted in a renewed campaign against him; his opponents pressed charges from Presbytery to Synod.

When UTS founders first met in October, 1835, in New York, Barnes's right to preach had been suspended by the Synod of Philadelphia, and this situation helped to fuel the New School Presbyterians' desire to found a new seminary in the city. In 1836, the Synod of the General Assembly reversed Barnes's suspension. In 1851 he was named Moderator of the General Assembly, and he helped shape its antislavery sentiment and its strong position in favor of temperance reform.

His active ministry in Philadelphia continued until 1867, when, due to failure of his sight, he resigned his charge and was made Pastor Emeritus. Yet he continued to preach in the House of Refuge, of which he was a manager, and sat continuously on the Board of Directors of UTS from 1840 until his death on December 24, 1870, often traveling between the two cities. In 1867 he delivered the first course of lectures at UTS on the Ely Foundation, on the Evidences of Christianity in the Nineteenth Century, which were later published.

Published works among the more than 160 titles and editions in The Burke Library by Albert Barnes include:

Notes, Explanatory and Practical [Series of popular Bible study guides] ;

Inquiry into the Scriptural Views of Slavery;

Church and Slavery;

Way of Salvation;

Atonement in its Relations to Law and Moral Government;

Evidences of Christianity in the Nineteenth Century;

Prayers adapted to Family Worship;

Miscellaneous Essays and Reviews;

Two autobiographical works: *Life at Threescore; Life at Threescore and Ten.*

Barne's *Notes. . . On the New Testament*, had a large circulation in Great Britain and the U.S. Finally it should be noted that some of Barnes' sermons, which do not survive in any other form, were individually published as pamphlets, when the sermon was linked to a special occasion or to a popular theme.

Prentiss quotes Barnes on the preservation of sermons, of which this collection consists:

"Old sermons are among the most useless of all kinds of lumber when the man that wrote them is dead, and there is nothing that is more difficult to dispose of. They are not like old newspapers, useful to the grocer; the family of an old pastor does not like to burn them; they cannot be used again by those who come after him; no bookseller will print them and no one would buy them if they were printed. What would probably become of mine when I am dead? ... I could not doubt they would be likely to lie in some dusty corner of some old garret, encumbering the world, until moths and mice should consume the yellow leaves, and at last, tired with seeing them, some duster and sweeper of the garret would resolve to get them out of the way, and commit the fragments of what had cost me so much labor and prayer to the flames."

Collection Scope and Content Note

This single-series collection consists of 29 manuscript sermons, numbered and titled by Barnes. The organization follows his numbering system and this numbering is to be found at the end of each folder entry in Contents list. Dates included in the Contents list reflect use of the sermons and where a date span is given, only the first and last use are indicated in this list. Sermons are written in ink, with notes, cancellations, and marginalia.

George Lewis Prentiss in *Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York* (1889) quotes Barnes on the process of writing and binding his sermons:

"My sermons had been written with great care, and many of them were ready for the press. I had folded and ruled my paper; I had with my own hands stitched them together with as much skill as a bookbinder would have done. Nay, I had actually employed a bookbinder to prepare little sermon-books of suitable size, and with a suitable cover, and had valued myself on the neatness of my manuscript; for that portion of my audience that occupied the galleries could look down upon my sermon as I carefully laid it in the open Bible, and I had a conscious pride in the feeling that my sermon was in entire keeping with the other arrangements in the sanctuary. But what should be done with them now? I resolved to burn them, and thus to save all trouble to my friends when I should have gone to my long resting-place. I took a day for the purpose, and I committed them in installments of a dozen or more to the flames. I watched them as they were slowly consumed. They were not martyrs, but it was a kind of martyrdom in itself. The end of life was really coming. The beginning of the end was near. I saw them "into smoke consume away."

Prentiss claims that a friend of his [Fanny M. Gibbs] "chanced to call upon Mr. Barnes while he was engaged in burning up his old sermons, and she still preserves several which her entreaty saved from the flames." The small group of sermons in this collection is the result of that intervention.

Bibliography

- Handy, Robert T. *History of Union Theological Seminary in New York*. New York: Columbia UP, 1987, 5-7.
- Prentiss, George Lewis. *The Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York: Historical and Biographical Sketches of its First Fifty Years*. New York: Anson D. F. Randolph & Co., 1889, 164-174.

Processing

Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. A rereading of the original manuscript numbering by Rev. Barnes has consequently enabled Barnes' original order to be re-established in this group of sermons.

Contents list

Box	Folder	Contents	Barne's #
1	1	Proverbs 15.18-Christian Theology, 1845-59	[75]
1	2	1 Thessalonians. 5.23-Christian Theology, 1843-59	[76]
1	3	John 17.17-Christian Theology, 1843-54	[77]
1	4	1 Peter 1.15, 16-Christian Theology, 1843-59	[78]
1	5	1 John 3.9-Christian Theology, 1843-59	[79]
1	6	2 Peter 3.18- Christian Theology, 1842-59	[80]
1	7	Philippians 3.12 -14-Christian Theology, 1843-59	[81]
1	8	Col. 3.12; Rom. 12.10-Blessings of a Benignant Spirit, 1840-41	[462]
1	9	Acts 8.4-Duty of Christians When Scattered Aboard, 1842-57	[512]
1	10	1 Thessalonians. 4.13-Hope in the Christian's Death,	[527]
1	11	2 Timothy 4.6-8-Prospect of Death to a Christian, 1843-48	[529]
1	12	Jeremiah 41.50-Duty of Remembering, [184?]	[570]
1	13	Acts 20.22-Our Ignorance of the Future, 1846	[587]
1	14	Joshua 24.17, 18-God Our Preserver, 1846-[5?]	[591]
1	15	Genesis 5. 24-Practicality of a Life of Eminent Piety, 1847-55	[603]
1	16	Luke 10.42-Mary's Choice, 1848-51	[621]
1	17	Genesis 3.8-19-What Shall Be Done with Sin? 1848	[631]
1	18	Matthew 7.1-Censorious Judging, 1849	[641]
1	19	1 Timothy 6-Contentment, 1849	[643]
1	20	Romans 8.2-Law of the Spirit of Life, 1849	[647]
1	21	Thessalonians 5.19-Quenching the Spirit, 1849	[650]
1	22	Lamentations 4.1-Gold Become Dim, 1849	[662]
1	23	Matthew 15.19, 20-Human Heart, 1848	[674]
1	24	Matthew 13.31, 32-Christian Experience, 1850	[681]
1	25	Matthew 13.33-Christian Experience, 1850	[682]
1	26	1 Peter 1:15, 16-Christian Experience, 1850	[683]
1	27	1 John 3. 8-10-Christian Experience, 1850	[684]
1	28	John 17.17-Christian Experience, 1850	[685]
1	29	John 20.29-Blessings of Faith Compared With Sight, 1851	[706]