

**MEMOIR OF REV.
SETH BARNES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649380152

Memoir of Rev. Seth Barnes by Herman Bisbee

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
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HERMAN BISBEE

**MEMOIR OF REV.
SETH BARNES**



I am yours

J. Barry

MEMOIR

OF

REV. SETH BARNES,

BY

HERMAN BISBEE.

"Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek."

CINCINNATI:
WILLIAMSON & CANTWELL,
OFFICE OF THE "STAR IN THE WEST."
1868.

M. W.

TO
THE UNIVERSALISTS OF THE WEST,
In Grateful Remembrance
OF
THEIR AFFECTION FOR THE SUBJECT OF THIS MEMOIR,
AND
IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR FIDELITY TO PRINCIPLE AND
ENERGY IN BUILDING INSTITUTIONS WHICH SHALL
FOREVER FORTIFY AND STRENGTHEN OUR RE-
LIGION, THIS RECORD OF A SAINTLY LIFE,
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

BY
THE AUTHOR.

Burdick 11 Sept. 1913

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INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

WEST CAMBRIDGE, MASS., April, 1867.

BR. BISSEE :

Borne across half the continent, your invitation to write something to appear in the Memoir of Rev. Seth Barnes reaches me at my home near the Atlantic shore.

In accordance with that, and with my own feelings, I pen these lines. I seem to see our brother now as I so often saw him at his home on the banks of the Mississippi. For nearly two years my residence was at Minneapolis, just over the river. At the gateway of his yard, near the river, I first looked on his genial face, and heard his cordial words, and felt the warm grasp of his hand. On the same spot we bade each other good-by, cheered by the hope that we should meet again on earth. God willed otherwise. Our brother was called away from life to the ever-green hills of heaven. Our next meeting will be on the farther bank of the river that flows silently between time and eternity.

From the first I was strongly drawn to him. Soon I learned to love him as a father. We met often. It was good to be with him. No breath of discord ever rippled the surface of our mutual affection. He was a safe adviser and an unflinching friend. My Sunday service most of the time was in the afternoon. This gave me the opportunity of attending his service, and worshipping with him and his people in the morning. It was one of the best hours of the week to me when I walked to his beautiful church, and there listened to his clear, practical and earnest enforcement of the truths of heaven. There were no counterfeit utterances in his prayer or sermon. Every thought bore the golden impress of sincerity, and was coined in the mint of his own Christian experience. His sermons always did me good; and the condition of his parish, full in numbers and fervent in devotion, was ample evidence that they were abundantly helpful to others.

He was especially fervid when dwelling on the kindling hopes of heaven. His smile was the sweetest I ever saw on face of man. His glowing soul shone through and lightened every feature, and, when pointing the sorrowing heart to the upper world, his face seemed radiant with a reflection of its glory.

Nearly every Monday I saw him at his home. It was such a home as every minister should have, for Christian love hallowed it day by day. It was joy to see how tenderly Br. Barnes and his dear wife leaned their souls upon each other. He was so thoughtful of her, and she was ever so of him. How careful he was, heeding all those little attentions that so many neglect, but which are the flowers of wedded life, and are even more beautiful rendered by one of his years than when given by the young. Then she was so devoted to him. Ever an excellent wife, a loving companion, and a discreet counselor in all things. Twain in body, their souls were one. For many years they had walked hand in hand the journey of life. Part of the way was bright; but some spots had been dark and others rough. The roughness was smoothed, the shadows lightened, and the brightness increased by the mutual help extended by each to the other.

His people loved him. The whole community respected him. When other preachers who sought that distant field proved unfaithful, he stood like a rock, strong in his own integrity. His character was so pure that sectarian animosity bowed down and did it reverence. His name was a rallying cry for the Universalists of the State. That our cause outlived the storm so well was due to him. His influence was not like the torrent which foams and rushes wildly on for a time, and then dries up like the morning dew. It was a constant stream, flowing calmly on, deepening and broadening as it swept through the years, making society green with growing virtues around him, and blessing a whole denomination with its benignant flow. His life was filled with love of God and love of man. He felt the responsibility which rested on him as a Christian minister. He both preached Universalism and lived it. All through the West are scattered noble men and women whose lives are a living defense of our faith, and who date their conversion to him.

The affectionate of many to whom he had been a spiritual father,

went out towards him, and twined tenderly around him, as the vine goes out and seeks the support of a grand old forest tree. And, as the tree falls before the woodman's ax, dragging down with it the vine that coils around it and the tendrils that clasp its twigs; so when our brother fell by the stroke of Death, these affectionate clung to him and his, with even a closer tenacity than during his life. His good name is now the inheritance of the denomination that he loved. It is more than this. It is a legacy to Christianity. Such legacies constitute the true wealth of the world, and not its fields of corn and wheat, and mines of gold and coal and iron.

Many hearts were sad as the news came to them that Br. Barnes was dead. And two of the saddest received the word in far New England whither they had gone not very long before. I can not think of my Western home and he not there. Many kind friends remain on both sides of the river, but the scene is not complete with Br. Barnes left out. His spirit lingers there, and in my memory will ever linger.

That voice which spoke in tones of kindly friendship is silent now. Sightless the eye through which a royal soul looked out. Still is the heart that throbbed with earnest life. Cold in the sleep of death is the hand which bravely bore the banner of the Cross. Low lies the head. Silent the dust sleeps in its narrow bed. The free-born winds of the prairie sweetly chant his requiem, sorrowing for this faithful Christian man. But death is gain to him. His freed spirit has gone up to shine forever, a guardian star, for the dear ones he ardently loved. Let us who knew him embalm his memory. Let us emulate his high example. Let us consecrate ourselves anew to the holy faith he preached, and go truthfully forward to join him in the immortal home.

J. W. KEYES.