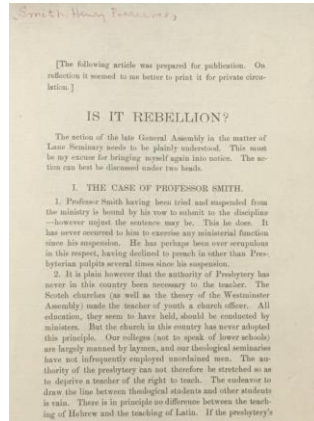


**The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary,
Columbia University in the City of New York**

Union Theological Seminary Archives 1

Finding Aid for

Henry Preserved Smith, 1864-1925



Is It Rebellion? [pamphlet]. UTS1: Henry Preserved Smith Papers, 1864-1925, series 1, box 1, folder 1. The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York

Finding Aid prepared by: Rebecca Nieto, February 2017

With financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation

Summary Information

Creator: Henry Preserved Smith, 1847-1927
Title: Henry Preserved Smith Papers, 1864-1925
Inclusive dates: 1864-1925
Bulk dates: 1891-1912
Abstract: Presbyterian minister in Ohio and New York; scholar with specializations in Hebrew and Cognate Languages, historical and critical interpretations of the Bible; graduate studies at Lane Theological Seminary, Universities of Leipzig and Berlin; tried for heresy by Presbyterian Church, 1892-1894; Professor of Church history and Davenport Professor of Hebrew and Cognate Languages at Union Theological Seminary, 1917-1925.
Size: 9 boxes, 4.25 lin.ft.
Storage: Onsite storage
Repository: The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary
3041 Broadway
New York, NY 10027
Email: burkespecial@library.columbia.edu

Administrative Information

- Provenance:** The Henry Preserved Smith Papers were among a large group of unprocessed materials that were organized in 2017 with the support of the Henry Luce Foundation and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation.
- Access:** Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to burkespecial@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. The scrapbooks and notes in this collection are in a fragile condition, and necessitate great care in handling and potential reproduction restrictions to be determined at the discretion of archives staff.
- Preferred Citation:** UTS1: Henry Preserved Smith Papers, series #, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Biography

Henry Preserved Smith was a Presbyterian educator, scholar and librarian at Union Theological Seminary. Smith was born in Troy Ohio, on October 23, 1847. The son of Lucy Mayo Smith and Preserved Smith (himself a prominent historian of the Protestant Reformation), Henry Preserved was poised from an early age to pursue a career in the ministry. He earned his A.B. from Amherst College in 1869 before going on to pursue religious studies at the graduate level, first at Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati from 1869 to 1872, then at the Universities of Berlin and Leipzig from 1872 to 1874 and 1876 to 1877, respectively. During his stay back in Ohio between academic terms in Germany, Smith was ordained in the Presbytery of Dayton on June 8, 1875. While there, he also served as an instructor in church history at Lane from 1874 to 1875 and instructor of Hebrew from 1875 to 1876. He remained at Lane for much of his career, serving as assistant professor (1877-1879) and later professor (1879-1893) in Hebrew and Old Testament exegesis there.

Contrary to Smith's conservative upbringing in the church, he was preeminent among Presbyterian scholars of his day for being open to historical criticism when interpreting the Bible, an inclination that resulted in Smith's being charged with heresy by the Presbytery of Cincinnati in 1892. This trial came on the heels of Charles Augustus Briggs' well-known trial on charges similar to those brought against Henry Preserved, which included "holding that a minister could abandon essential tenets of doctrine and yet retain his ordination; teaching 'that the Holy Spirit did not so control the inspired writers in their composition of the Holy Scriptures as to make their utterances absolutely truthful'; and denying the inspiration of Scripture 'in the sense in which inspiration is attributed to the Holy Scriptures, by the Holy Scriptures themselves and by the Confession of Faith'". Found guilty of the latter two charges, Smith was stripped of his ordination and his teaching position in Ohio. The following five years were marked by considerable struggle as Smith was unable to regain a teaching position without his ordination license for several years.

Eventually, Smith obtained a post as professor of Biblical Literature and pastor at Amherst College, where he remained from 1898 to 1906 before going on to teach at Meadville Theological School from 1907 to 1913. Smith's scholarship regained its vigor in the years following his heresy trial, and established his role as a forerunner in Biblical scholars interested in criticism of Biblical texts, an evolution from his puritan education. All told, Smith's publications included *Inspiration and Inerrancy* (1893), *The Bible and Islam* (1897), *The Heretic's Defense: A Footnote to History* (1926), and various encyclopedia entries on exegetical commentary and Old Testament history.

In 1907, Smith became Union Theological Seminary's librarian, a post he would hold until 1925 concurrent with his role as Davenport Professor of Hebrew and Cognate Languages from 1917 to 1925, and later as professor emeritus from 1925 until his death in 1927. Julius A. Brewer, one of Smith's colleagues at Union, would remember Smith as "so modest and so gentle in his whole behavior that it seemed hardly possible that he could be one of the fearless fighters for liberty of investigation who suffered and sacrificed for truth's sake in order that we might be free". Like Briggs, Smith was unhindered by his trials in the Presbyterian Church, becoming an eminent figure in critical and historical investigations of the Bible in his time. He was recognized with honorary Doctorate of Divinity degrees from Maryville College (1883), Amherst College (1886) and the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) in 1888. After a singular career in his scholarship and teaching, Henry Preserved Smith died in Poughkeepsie, New York on February 26, 1927.

Collection Scope and Content Note

This collection is divided into two series of predominately textual materials. The first series includes scrapbooks as they were assembled by Smith to document his heresy trial, as well as the contemporaneous trial of Charles Augustus Briggs. The first five volumes of the collection include scrapbooks of clippings, notes and pasted-in correspondence detailing the trial and its coverage in periodicals and newspapers at the time, followed by a scrapbook of articles dated 1881 to 1900, and finally with three scrapbooks on Hebrew literature. The next series, Writings and Notes, spans 1.5 linear feet and includes nine of Smith's notebooks, followed by loose correspondence, speeches, trial materials, and lecture notes. These are kept in the original manner Smith kept them:

- **Series 1: Scrapbooks, 1891-1925**

This series consists of bound and dated scrapbooks arranged in two sections – scrapbooks including clippings and notes relating to Smith's heresy trial from 1891 to 1904, followed by correspondence and notes relating to teaching, specifically to Hebrew Literature. All material in scrapbooks are pasted onto the leaves of the scrapbook.

- **Series 2: Writings and Notes, 1864-1924**

This series consists of loose textual materials maintained by Smith during his work as a professor and librarian. The first box consists of speeches delivered in the proceedings of Smith's heresy trial, while the latter three boxes contain lecture notes and course plans. While the institutional affiliation of these courses is unavailable in the materials

themselves, the subject matter of these materials suggest they span Smith's entire teaching career at Amherst, Meadville, and Union Theological Seminary.

Processing

Metal clips and staples were removed from materials and folded items were flattened. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Acidic items were separated from one another by interleaving with acid-free paper as needed. Scrapbooks with damaged boards with secured with cotton ties and housed vertically to protect the text block. The painting was placed in a Mylar envelope.

Further Sources

Henry Preserved Smith's autobiography, *The Heretic's Defense: A Footnote to History* (1926), was published by C. Scribner & Sons and includes much of the autobiographical information contained in his archival writings.

For more information on heresy trials contemporaneous to Smith's, refer to the [Charles Augustus Briggs Papers](#) at the Burke Library.

"Henry Preserved Smith" biographical entry. In McKim, Donald K., ed. [Dictionary of Major Biblical Interpreters](#). IVP Academic, 2007.

Brewer, Julius A. "Henry Preserved Smith". In *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*. XLIII: July 1927, number 4. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/528769?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Heretic_s_Defense.html?id=XVg_AAAAIAAJ

The Burke Library also holds the Bible study notebooks of Preserved Smith (1759-1834), Henry Preserved Smith's grandfather. The finding aid for that collection can be found on the [Burke Archives' website](#) and consulted in person at the Burke Library.

Contents list

Series 1: Scrapbooks, 1891- 1925

Series Box Folder Contents

Heresy Trial

1	1	1	Vol.1 – April to June, 1891
1	1	2	Vol.2 – July to February and Briggs Controversy Supplement, 1891-1893
1	2	1	Vol. 3 – Clippings from January to June 8, 1892-1893
1	2	2	Vol. 4 – Clippings from January 29 to May 17, 1893-1894
1	3	1	Vol. 5 – Clippings from May 21to March 27, 1894-1904

Writings and Notes

1	4	1	Opuscula Smithii – Tomus I, 1881-1900
1	4	2-3	Notes on Hebrew Literature vols. 1 and 2 [after Cornill, 100 B.C. --], [189?]
1	5	1	Notes on Hebrew Literature vol. 3 [189?]
1	5	2	Supplementary Letters and Clippings [Loose], 1904-1925

Series 2: Writings and Notes, 1864-1924

Series Box Folder Contents

Presbyterian Church Against H.P.S. Speeches, 1891-1893

2	1	1	Correspondence, 1919-1916
2	1	2	[Stenographic Reports] Speeches Made On October 13, 1893
2	1	3	Dr. James (Presbyterian Church of USA – Ohio Synod), 1893
2	1	4	Presbytery of Cincinnati Against HPS, 1891-1892
2	1	5	Speech by HPS and Appeal, 1893
2	1	6	Charges and Rulings – Presbytery of Cincinnati v. H.P. Smith, 1891-1892
2	1	7	The Apologetic Interpretation of Scripture in Islam and in Christianity and An Oriental Modernist [Articles], 1920-1924

Personal Writings and Lectures

2	2	1	Private Journal, 1864
2	2	2	Biblical Literature Lectures, 1898
2	2	3	Notebook, 1910-1912
2	2	4	Comparative Religion Notebook (Second Semester), 1912
2	2	5	Advanced Course – English Bible [191?]
2	2	6-7	Old Testament Notebooks 1-4, Undated
2	3	1	History of Religion Lecture and Library Notes, 191?
2	3	2	History of Religion, Greek Religion, Lecture and Library Notes, 1901-1911
2	3	3	Hampshire Conference at Amherst College, 1903
2	3	4	History of Religion Lectures, 1905
2	3	5	Lectures 27-31, Course Plans and Buddhism [190?]
2	3	6	Old Testament and Religions of Japan, Undated

2	4	1-2	Primitive, Roman, Greek and Indian Religions, Undated
2	4	3	Loose Notes, 191?
2	4	4	Letter from Bruno Hentschel (Leipzig) [in German], 1922
2	4	5	Portrait of H.P. Smith [painting], 18?