

The Burke Library
Union Theological Seminary Archives

Finding Aid
Arthur C. McGiffert, Jr. Papers, 1852-1993



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Finding Aid prepared by: Daniel Sokolow, August, 1995
Revision by Ruth Tonkiss Cameron, January 2005 and Rebecca Maria Nieto, 2017
With financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation

Summary Information

Creator: Arthur C. McGiffert, Jr
Title: Arthur C. McGiffert, Jr. Papers
Inclusive dates: 1852 - 1993
Bulk dates: 1890-1930
Abstract: Donated by A.C. McGiffert, Jr.'s son, Michael, these papers consist of Arthur C. McGiffert, Jr.'s UTS course notebooks, c. 1916-1917. The major part of the collection contains correspondence, sermons, publications, date books and other material relating to the Heresy trial of A. C. McGiffert, Senior. Further archival sources for A. C. McGiffert, Sr. are to be found in A.C. McGiffert, Senior. Papers.
Size: 15 boxes; 6.5 linear feet
Storage: Onsite storage
Repository: The Burke Library
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Administrative Information

Provenance: Michael McGiffert, Son of Arthur C McGiffert, Jr donated these papers to the Burke Library in 1993. The McGiffert Urn was an additional donation from Michael McGiffert to Union Theological Seminary in in 2007.

Access restrictions: This collection is unrestricted to researchers.

Preferred Citation: item, box number, folder number, Arthur C. McGiffert, Jr. Papers, 1852-1993, Union Theological Seminary Archives, The Burke Library, Columbia University Libraries, at Union Theological Seminary, New York

Biographical Note

Arthur Cushman McGiffert, Jr. was born in Cincinnati, Ohio on November 27, 1892, the son of Arthur C. McGiffert, Sr. and Gertrude Huntington Boyce. His father was a historian of Christian thought and both professor and president of Union Theological Seminary, and his mother was a poet. The family lived in Pelham Manor, N.Y. He went to school in New York City, and graduated from Harvard with a bachelor's degree in 1913. McGiffert followed Harvard with a fellowship at the American School of Classical Studies in Athens. He returned to the United States a year later and attended Union Theological Seminary, earning a B.D. degree in 1917 and an M.A. from Columbia at the same time.

McGiffert taught briefly at UTS, then worked for the YMCA and for the US Army as a chaplain. He returned to Harvard for graduate study, then went to Zurich as a UTS Traveling Fellow. He served as pastor for several different congregations, but settled at the All Souls Church of Lowell, Massachusetts between 1920 and 1926. McGiffert then moved to Chicago Theological Seminary, where he taught American religious thought from 1926 until 1939.

In 1939, McGiffert became president of the Pacific School of Religion, a post he held until 1945. He was active during World War II in social causes, including defending the rights of interned Japanese Americans and the rights of conscientious objectors. He returned to Chicago Theological Seminary in 1946 to serve as its president and was also president of the local ACLU. He retired from the school in 1959, and remained active in a range of church, academic and social/ethical activities. He held a Fulbright lectureship at Cambridge University in 1960, and he wrote several books, including a history of Chicago Theological Seminary.

McGiffert married Elisabeth Eliot, granddaughter of the well-known president of Harvard Charles Eliot, in 1917. The couple had three children, David Eliot, Michael, and Ellen. McGiffert died in Claremont, California on Friday 9 April 1993, at the age of 100.

[From: Unpublished Obituary of Michael McGiffert, April 10, 1993]

Biography: Arthur C. McGiffert, Sr.

Arthur C. McGiffert was born in Sauquoit, N.Y. in 1851, the son of Joseph Nelson McGiffert and Harriet Whiting Cushman. He graduated A.B. from Western Reserve University in 1882, and earned a B.D. from Union Theological Seminary in 1885. McGiffert continued his studies in Germany, where he earned a Ph.D. from Marburg in Church History under the tutelage of Adolph Harnack in 1888.

McGiffert returned to the United States to begin his teaching career at Lane Theological Seminary in Cleveland. He remained there as professor of church history until 1893, when he moved to Union Theological Seminary to take a similar position.

McGiffert's early years at Union were not entirely peaceful. Much like his colleague Charles A. Briggs, McGiffert was accused of heresy by the Presbyterian General Assembly. The controversy revolved around a footnote to his book, *A History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age*, in which he suggested that Jesus had intended the Last Supper as a permanent ceremony of the Christian faith. Conservative elements of Presbyterianism brought him up on charges in 1898. While McGiffert was eventually cleared of heresy, some were determined to continue the controversy. McGiffert decided that the simplest solution was to leave the Presbytery, and he became a Congregationalist.

Despite these troubles, UTS supported the embattled McGiffert completely. He was retained on the staff of the nominally Presbyterian institution, and shortly thereafter the oath required of all professors was changed to accommodate members of other denominations. McGiffert continued to teach, and in 1917 he took over as Union's eighth president, following the death of Francis Brown. McGiffert dealt with several major issues during his tenure as president. The first was the alteration of the Seminary's graduate department by toughening the requirements of the advanced degrees. This in turn led to increased staff needs, which further led to the first tuition requirements in Union's history.

The second issue of McGiffert's tenure was the Seminary's deficit, which hovered around \$850,000 by the end of World War I. McGiffert enlisted the help of Seminary supporters like John D. Rockefeller, Jr., and by the mid-1920's, he had erased the deficit and succeeded in raising over \$4 million for the school. These funds allowed the Seminary to expand the amount of dormitory space, build a refectory, and make other improvements.

Ill health forced McGiffert's retirement from both the presidency and the faculty in 1926. He spent his remaining years working on a number of books, the most famous being his two volume *History of Christian Thought*, which was published in 1933. The book covered virtually every Christian thinker from the beginning of the religion until the Renaissance. He intended to complete the work in a third volume, but died before it could be completed.

McGiffert was married twice, the first time to Eliza Isabelle King in 1885, who died in 1887. His second marriage was to Gertrude Huntington Boyce, a poet. McGiffert had three children. Elizabeth, from his first marriage, and Arthur C. McGiffert, Jr. and Katharine from his second. His son Arthur was himself a student at Union Theological Seminary, where he taught for a short time. Arthur C. McGiffert Sr. died in Dobbs Ferry, N.Y. in 1933, at the age of 82.

[From: *Dictionary of American Biography*. Supplement, vol. 1. NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944.;

Handy, Robert T. *A History of Union Theological Seminary in New York*. NY: Columbia University Press, 1987;

Melton, J. Gordon. *Religious Leaders of America*. Detroit: Gale Research, Inc., 1991]

Scope and Content Note

This collection is divided into three series; series II has been further divided into 6 subseries. Organization is alphabetical unless noted otherwise.

- **Series 1, Arthur C. McGiffert, Jr. (3 boxes, xx.xx linear ft.)**

This series consists of course notes taken by McGiffert during his course work at Union Theological Seminary. The notebooks are in no particular order, but groups of related subjects have been formed.

- **Series 2, Arthur C. McGiffert, Sr. (11 boxes, xx.xx linear ft.)**

This series contains materials related to the elder McGiffert. It has been divided into six subseries, arranged as follows:

Subseries 2A, Correspondence (1 box, xx.xx linear ft.)

contains letters written to and from McGiffert. Notable is his correspondence with Philip Schaff. Numbers in parentheses indicate the number of letters in each file.

Subseries 2B, Sermons, Lectures, Addresses (3 boxes, xx.xx lin.ft.)

contains various addresses made by McGiffert, primarily in manuscript form. Included are sermons, commencement addresses, memorial addresses, etc. A (+) symbol indicates that the address was delivered more than once.

Subseries 2C, Publications (3 boxes, xx.xx linear ft.)

consists of materials related to McGiffert's writings, including manuscripts, book reviews, printed copies of works, etc.

Subseries 2D, Heresy Trial (2 boxes, xx.xx linear ft.)

contains materials related to McGiffert's trial for heresy before the Presbyterian Church in 1898. Items include news clippings, correspondence, pamphlets, etc.

Subseries 2E, Finances (1 box, xx.xx linear ft.)

consists of financial materials including income tax forms and account books.

Subseries 2F, Date Books (1 box, xx.xx linear ft.)

contains McGiffert's appointment books from 1911 to 1933, although some years are missing.

- **Series 3, Miscellaneous (2 boxes, xx.xx linear ft.)**

contains other assorted materials including obituaries, news clippings, and a course notebook belonging to A.C. McGiffert Sr.'s father, J. N. McGiffert. The final box in this series contains the McGiffert Urn presented to McGiffert, Sr. by UTS Students and Faculty when he was appointed as Union President in 1917.

Processing

When The Burke Library acquired McGiffert's papers, an attempt was made to maintain the original order. All materials were placed in acid-free folders and boxes.

Contents List

Series I: Arthur C. McGiffert Jr. Course Notebooks

Series	Box	Folder	Description
1	1	1	Church History 1
1	1	2	Church History 1 & 2
1	1	3	Church History 3, Book 1
1	1	4	Church History 3, Book 2
1	1	5	Church History 4, Book 1
1	1	6	Church History 4, Book 2
1	1	7	English Church History
1	1	8	History 4
1	1	9	History of Reformation
1	1	10	History of Philosophy
1	2	1	New Testament 1
1	2	2	New Testament 2
1	2	3	Old Testament 1
1	2	4	Old Testament 2
1	2	5	Old Testament 83
1	2	6	Practical Theology 27
1	2	7	Practical Theology 45
1	2	8	Acts
1	2	9	Missions
1	2	10	Development of Christian Idea of God
1	2	11	Philosophy of Religion 11 & 12
1	3	1	Bible School
1	3	2	Greek 12
1	3	3	Notes - Book on Arthur C. McGiffert, Sr.

Series 2: Arthur C. McGiffert, Sr.

Subseries 2A: Correspondence

2A	1	1	George Barton, 1900 (2)
2A	1	2	Julius A. Bewer, 1899 (1)
2A	1	3	J. H. Bornstein, 1911 (1)
2A	1	4	Francis Brown, 1899 - 1901 (9)
2A	1	5	K. Budde, 1898 (1)
2A	1	6	[A. Convert?], 1911 (1)
2A	1	7	Edwin H. Delk, 1911 (1)
2A	1	8	F. Grupendorf, 1899 (1)
2A	1	9	Charles C. Hall, 1897 (2)
2A	1	11	Thomas S. Hastings, 1890 - 1895 (4)
2A	1	12	F.J. F. Jackson, 1919 - 1932 (4)
2A	1	13	Samuel M. Jackson, 1889 - 1911, (37)
2A	1	10	Adolph Harnack, 1895 (1)
2A	1	14	Robert U. Johnson, 1911 (1)

Series 2: A. C. McGiffert, Sr.**Subseries 2A: Correspondence (Cont'd)**

Series	Box	Folder	Description
2A	1	15	G. Kruger, 1897 - 1932 (3)
2A	1	16	Shailer Mathews, 1900 (4)
2A	1	17	Karl Miller, 1897 - 1902 (4)
2A	1	18	J. G. Monfort, 1889 - 1890 (4)
2A	1	19	E. D. Morris, 1888 (3)
2A	1	20	J. Winthrop Platner, 1897 - 1905 (11)
2A	1	21	Joakim Reinhard, 1911 (1)
2A	1	22	David S. Schaff, 1892 - 1901 (5)
2A	1	23	Philip Schaff, 1886 - 1893 (95)
2A	1	24	Henry P. Smith, 1896 - 1911 (4)
2A	1	25	Unknown, n.d. (1)
2A	1	26	Ambrose W. Vernon, 1900 - 1902 (15)
2A	1	27	Ethelbert Warfield, 1888 (3)
2A	1	28	E. E. White, 1891 (1)

Subseries 2 B: Sermons, Lectures and Addresses**REVIEW AND STANDARDIZE**

(+) indicates that a sermon was delivered more than once.

2B	1	1	Christ's Creed - 1888 (+)
2B	1	2	Christian as a Prophet - 1894 (+)
2B	1	3	Christian's Debt to the World - 1893 (+)
2B	1	4	Christians: Salt of the Earth - 1902 (+)
2B	1	5	Doing of God's Will - 1902 (+)
2B	1	6	Experience Worketh Hope - 1919 (+)
2B	1	7	Function of the Ministry - 1921
2B	1	8	Gift of Interpretation - 1893
2B	1	9	Greatness through Service - 1891 (+)
2B	1	10	If I Do This - 1918
2B	1	11	Importance of Character Building - 1884 (+)
2B	1	12	Inspiration - 1892 (+)
2B	1	13	Living the Spirit - 1889 (+)
2B	1	14	Poverty: The Condition... - 1889 (+)
2B	1	15	Power of Faith - 1888 (+)
2B	1	16	Social Message - 1908 (+)
2B	1	17	That They without Us - 1921
2B	2	1	Calvin's Theology - n.d.
2B	2	2	Changing Conception of History - n.d.
2B	2	3	Christian Minister - (1900?) (MS)
2B	2	4	Christian Minister - (1900?) (TS)
2B	2	5	Christianity and Democracy - n.d.
2B	2	6	Commencement - 1916
2B	2	7	Commencement - 1917
2B	2	8	Commencement - 1918

Series 2: A. C. McGiffert, Sr.

Subseries 2 B: Sermons, Lectures, & Addresses (Cont'd)

Series	Box	Folder	Description
2B	2	9	Commencement - 1919
2B	2	10	Commencement - 1920
2B	2	11	Commencement - 1921
2B	2	12	Commencement - 1922
2B	2	13	Commencement - 1923
2B	2	14	Commencement - 1924
2B	2	15	Democracy and Religion - n.d.
2B	2	16	Dilemma of the Church - 1918
2B	2	17	Dr. Platner - n.d.
2B	2	18	Ethic of Position - 1921
2B	2	19	Francis Brown - 1916
2B	2	20	Graduating Class, Lane Theological Seminary - 1893
2B	2	21	Humanizing of History - n.d.
2B	2	22	Humanizing of History - n.d. (Draft)
2B	2	23	Luther's Influence on Education - 1917
2B	2	24	Miraculous Elements - n.d.
2B	2	25	Place of Christian - 1910 (+)
2B	2	26	Prayer - 1923
2B	2	27	Religious Obligations - 1907
2B	2	28	Religious Value of Study - n.d.
2B	2	29	Scope and Limitations - n.d.
2B	2	30	Student's Reception - 1914 - 1918
2B	2	31	Teaching Church - 1920 (+)
2B	2	32	On Teaching of Greek and Latin - n.d.
2B	2	33	[30th Anniversary of A.C. McGiffert, Sr.?] - n.d.
2B	2	34	Evolution of Christianity - (1923 - 1925) (MS)
2B	2	35	Evolution of Christianity - 1923 - 1925 (TS)
2B	3	1	Lectures and Sermons
2B	3	2	Lectures and Sermons
2B	3	3	Lectures and Sermons
2B	3	4	Lectures and Sermons
2B	3	5	Lectures and Sermons

Series 2: A. C. McGiffert, Sr.

Subseries 2C: Publications

2C	1	1	Dialogue between Christian and Jew - 1889
2C	1	2	Teaching of the Twelve Apostles - 1884
2C	1	3	Teaching of the Twelve Apostles - 1885
2C	1	4	Studies in the Christian Religion - 1926 (Japanese)
2C	1	5	Special Reading List on the Reformation - 1917
2C	1	6	Union Seminary Quarterly Review - 1968
2C	1	7	Union Seminary Quarterly Review - 1969
2C	1	8	Semi-Centennial of Philip Schaff - 1892

Series 2: A. C. McGiffert, Sr.**Subseries 2C: Publications**

Series	Box	Folder	Description
2C	2	1	Martin Luther - Scrapbook
2C	2	2	God and the World, ms
2C	2	3	Articles and Clippings
2C	2	4	Martin Luther - General
2C	2	5	Miscellaneous Reviews
2C	2	6	Reviews by A.C. McGiffert, Sr.
2C	2	7	Reviews of "Apostle's Creed"
2C	2	8	Reviews of "God of the Early Christians"
2C	2	9	Reviews of "History of Christian Thought"
2C	2	10	Reviews of "Historical Works of Eusebius"
2C	2	11	Reviews of "Martin Luther"
2C	2	12	Reviews of "Protestant Thought before Kant"
2C	2	13	Reviews of "Rise of Modern"
2C	3	1	Notes - Bellamy
2C	3	2	Notes - Channing
2C	3	3	Notes - Dwight
2C	3	4	Notes - New England Theology - Introduction
2C	3	5	Notes - New England Theology - 18th Century Liberalism
2C	3	6	Notes - New England Theology
2C	3	7	Notes - New England Theology
2C	3	8	Notes - Protestant Theology
2C	3	9	Notes - Untitled Manuscript
2C	3	10	Notes - Untitled Manuscript
2C	3	11	Notes - Untitled Manuscript
2C	3	12	Prayers at Sunday Chapel
2C	3	13	Assorted Prayers

Subseries 2 D: Heresy Trial

2D	1	1	Scrapbook
2D	1	2	Correspondence, 1897 - 1900 (15)
2D	1	3	News Clippings
2D	1	4	News Clippings
2D	1	5	Official Documents
2D	2	1	Pamphlets
2D	2	2	Publications

Series 2: Arthur C. McGiffert, Sr.**Subseries 2 E: Finances**

2E	1	1	Estate of Arthur C. McGiffert, Sr. - 1962
2E	1	2	Income Taxes - 1915 - 1925
2E	1	3	Account Book
2E	1	4	Account Book
2E	1	5	Account Book

Series 2: Arthur C. McGiffert, Sr. (Cont'd)

Subseries 2 E: Finances

Series	Box	Folder	Description
2E	1	6	Account Book

Subseries 2 F: Date Books

2F	1	1	A.C. McGiffert, Sr - Date Books (15), 1911 - 1933 [Incomplete]
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Series 3: General

3	1	1	Course Notes by J.N. McGiffert
3	1	2	"History of Christian Thought" by Paul Tillich, 1956
3	1	3	UTS Pamphlets, 1917 - 1925
3	1	4	Installation of H.A.M. Briggs
3	1	5	Correspondence, Michael McGiffert, 1993 (1)
3	1	6	News clippings
3	1	7	Memorial Bulletin, A.C. McGiffert, Sr. - 1933
3	1	8	Obituary, A.C. McGiffert, Jr., 1992
3	1	9	News Clippings - H.P. Smith Heresy Trial, 1892
3	1	10	UTS and Lane Theological Seminary
3	1	11	Europe - A.C. McGiffert Sr. – Travel Documents, Attendance at University of Marburg, 1920 - 1922
3	2	1	McGiffert Urn, 1917, silver urn with dedicatory engraving