

New York: March 1 '78

My dear Sir,

Thank you for what you tell me in regard to the democratic Manifesto. So far it explains Gerrit Smith's action and clear him from the suspicion of Subterfuge. But this, as action, is only an incidental point. His denial as I apprehend went beyond the Harper's Ferry attempt, & covered the entire connection and complicity with John Brown's scheme. His family claim nothing less than this for his claim. I now reluctantly constrained & challenge. Until the testimony of Mr. Sandborn Edwin Mason; John Brown, Jr. can be invalidated – until the account of the meeting describes ___ of the biography can he be discredited. Smith's candor stands impeached and thus far, I have seen no cause for doubting these witnesses. If you can throw any light on this matter I shall be glad, even at this late day to get it: for the question of suppressing the book entirely hangs on the author's willingness to recast that passage. I am ready to do it on conviction, but not otherwise.

My study of Smith's character makes it possible for me to believe him capable of prevarication. His enormous egotism— his passion for notoriety, which pushed him to the front w/ madly at times was coupled with a singular timidity in the face of disagreeable consequence, and with a prudent cunning which weighed eventuality and watched opportunities of escape. But I may be all wrong. .

Sincerely Yours,
P.B. Frothingham

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