

Inventory to the
Robert Boyte Crawford Howell Collection

AR. 595



Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives

Robert Boyte Crawford Howell

Manuscript Volumes

1858-1860

AR. 595

I. Historical Sketch

Howell was born in Wayne County, North Carolina on March 10, 1801. He attended Columbian College in Washington, DC. A year later in 1827 he was ordained as a Baptist minister. In 1834 he accepted an appointment as a missionary to the west from the American Baptist Home Mission Society and pastor of the Nashville church, effective January 1, 1835. He began The Baptist, a monthly paper, in 1835, and edited it most of the time until he gave it to the Tennessee Baptists in 1846.

In 1850, Howell became pastor of the Second Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia, which he served until his return to Nashville in July, 1857. During his absence from Tennessee, Landmarkism became powerful in Tennessee under the leadership of James Robinson Graves. Howell opposed Landmarkism and was active in freeing the Bible Board, Nashville, from Landmark domination. He opposed the creation of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Union at Nashville by Graves and his associates and the close connections with Graves, Marks & Co., the proprietors of the Southwestern Baptist Publishing House in Charleston, South Carolina, and saw no need for the Union. Out of the situation developed the Graves-Howell controversy and disruption of the First Baptist Church of Nashville. Graves and Howell exchanged verbal attacks, Graves using The Tennessee Baptist to express his displeasure at his pastor's opposition to the Union.

The First Baptist Church of Nashville made five charges of "unchristian conduct" against Graves and expelled him from the membership. Friction continued as the state convention and local association recognized Graves and his followers as the First Baptist Church. Graves spread his agitation throughout the denomination. The Mississippi State Baptist Convention sent a committee to make efforts to adjust the controversy. Their efforts were not successful.

Graves and his associates urged their followers (Landmarkers) to split churches, associations and conventions. Graves attacked several prominent denominational leaders for their hostility to the Southern Baptist Sunday School Union. By 1860 the tide began to turn against Graves. The demise of the Union and financial woes of Graves, Marks & Co. undoubtedly had some impact of this situation. In 1868 the local association invited the First Church of Nashville back into the association.

For further information see:

Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists.

Both Sides: A full investigation of the charges presented against Elder J. R. Graves by R.B.C. Howell and others, by a council composed of delegates from twenty churches of the Concord Association.

The Trial of J. R. Graves, First Baptist Church, Nashville, Tennessee

Hailey, O. L. J. R. Graves-Life, Times and Teaching, 1929.

Horne, Linwood T. A Study of the Life and Work of R.B.C. Howell, Th.D. dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1958 2213.

Martin, William Terry, Samuel Henderson and His Response to J. R. Graves and Landmarkism Through the Southwestern Baptist, 1857-1859. M. A., thesis, Samford University, 1977.

James Robinson Graves Papers, 1858-1879. Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, AR #9

Robert Boyte Crawford Papers, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, AR# 140.

II. Scope and Content

The collection consists of three bound volumes of Howell material. The first two volumes include letters, reports, and statements relating to the Howell-Graves controversy in the 1850's and 1860's. The third volume is a book of sermons by Howell. These date from 1845 to 1855. These papers are handwritten originals or handwritten copies by Howell or his daughter.

Volume I (1858-1859) deals with the controversy and the efforts of First Baptist Church Nashville to expell J. R. Graves. The volume includes:

A paper read by J. C. Dardin before the Bible Board of the SBC concerning the "Bible Board, Graves and Dayton; Letter from R.B.C. Howell to J. E. Dawson, May 11, 1858;

Impeachment charges against Graves (sent to Sam Henderson, Tuskegee, Alabama, for review);

Impeachment charges against Graves;

Arraignment of Rev. Graves at First Baptist Church, Nashville (copy of proceedings taken by Howell's daughter);

The Graves trial;

Report from committee to "labor with" Graves followers;

Letter to associational moderator;

Graves' speech before Tennessee Convention, March, 1859, and reaction;

Communication from First Baptist Nashville to the church in Marietta, Georgia, September 13, 1859;

Letter sent to "various brethren by a voluntary committee," September 16, 1859;

"What is the Church," Western Watchman, February 2, 1860;

"Standing Presbyteries," Religious Herald, October 1859;

"Disciplinary Power;"

Letter to the Mississippi Baptist, May 12, 1859;

Constitution and government of Concord Association;

"Principles of Church Government; and

"Church Independence."

Volume 2 (1860) deals with the efforts of the Mississippi Convention to mediate in the controversy. It includes:

Address of Howell to committee of the Baptist State Convention of Mississippi;

Report of committee to be presented for adoption, September 12, 1860 concerning members who left the church (not presented);

Report prepared for the committee appointed to conduct on behalf of the church negotiations with the committee of the Baptist State Convention of Mississippi but which was not adopted (includes copies of correspondence);

Answer of the First Baptist Church of Nashville to the Baptist State Convention of Mississippi, adopted September 12, 1860;

Drafts of response to Mississippi committee;

Thirty-third pastoral discourse (Howell), the nineteenth in Nashville, January 1, 1860; and

Letters to the committee of the Baptist State Convention (Letter 1-10).

Some of the reports and letters are numbered but the entire volumes are not numbered. The manuscripts are open for researchers.

Volume 3. (1845-1855) consists of 65 sermons by Howell. The bound volume includes the following sermons:

1) "Confidence in God is an effectual support in all the trials of life."
John 14:1
November 2, 1846. p. 1

2) "Sermon on resuming the pastorship"
I Samuel 12:7
November 22, 1846. p. 5

3) "Improvement of time: A post commission sermon for the first of the year"
Col. 4:5. p. 25

- 4) "What is Christ to you?"
July 25, 1852. p. 33.
- 5) "God's property in His people."
September 9, 1852. p. 47
- 6) "Motives to Christian action." Is. 60:1
July 28, 1852. p. 59
- 7) "Spiritual health." 3 John 2v
May 9, 1852. p. 65
- 8) "Obstacles to the prevalence of truth." John 5:44
March 1, 1847. p. 73
- 9) Funeral of Rev'd James Whitsett 2 Tim. 4:6-8
April 12, 1849. p. 79
- 10) "The intercession of Christ." Heb. 7:25
July 3, 1853. p. 87
- 11) "Duty of the Church to its individual members." Gen. 4:9
July 23, 1853. p. 104
- 12) "The privileges of believers all brace all the blessings of divine
grace." (published) p. 109
- 13) "Pardon of all his sins." p. 113 (transferred 1860 into a sermon)
- 14) "Jesus Christ is the true God." p. 136
- 15) "The duties of believers in Christ are numerous and
important." p. 160
- 16) "The confession of our Lord Jesus Christ before men is a necessary
result of compliance with the general duties of religion." p. 166
- 17) "Departed saints are not to be lamented. " (Funeral of two
brothers -Geo. W. and James Matlock) p. 177
- 18) "The duty of Christians to give themselves to the church."
2 Cor. 8:5
Aug. 9, 1846. p. 184
- 19) "The origin, prevalence, and consequence, of sin."
Romans 5:12
December 21, 1847. p. 196
- 20) "Conditions of the grace of God is given to us on condition that we
love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." Eph. 6:24
December 13, 1845. p. 204
- 21) "The true relations between religion and civil government."
Matt. 22:21
July 4, 1845. p. 211

- 22) "Influence of the sanctuary." (sermon at the dedication of Salem church, Caroline, VA.)
July 22, 1852. p. 228
- 23) "Who are entitled to receive baptism?" p.272
- 24) "Alleged rule relating to EIS." n. p.
- 25) "What is baptism?" Gal. 3:24
Feb. 8, 1852. p. 306
- 26) "Who are to be baptized?"
Feb. 15, 1852. p. 370
- 27) "Redemption." Eph. 1:7
December 4, 1852. p. 436
- 28) "Resurrection of the body." (funeral of Rev. Wm. Hatchett, Ridemont, VA) 1 Cor. 15:35
August 15, 1854. p. 485
- 29) "The regeneration of the soul, a spirit, not changes, produced alone by the Holy Ghost is necessary to the salvation of sinners." 2 Cor. 3:4-8
p.489
- 30) "Believers confess Christ before men specifically in baptism." p. 524
- 31) "Summary and conclusion -Chapter XIV" p. 538
- 32) "Christ a hard master." Matt. 25:24
Feb. 20, 1848. p. 549
- 33) "Christian feeling" Ezek. 33:32
Jan. 18, 1852. p. 555
- 34) "Inheritance of the Saints." 1 Cor. 3:22
Jan. 18,1852. p. 571
- 35) "Christian love." 1 John 4:7
Nov. 11,1857. p. 577
- 36) "The inheritance of God." Rom. 1:21
May 23, 1847. p. 581
- 37) "Mediation of Christ." 1 Tim. 2: 5,6
June 19, 1853. p. 588
- 38) "The true church of Christ." 1 Tim. 3:15
Sept. 5, 1852. p. 617
- 39) "Uses of the law in the scheme of salvation by faith." Gal. 3:24
June 9, 1852. p. 646
- 40) "The divine protection." John 17:15
February 17, 1856. p. 662
- 41) "Christian strength." 2 Tim. 2: 1

Nov. 23, 1851. p. 687

42) "The Christian Life." Gen. 5:24
December 14, 1851. p. 692

43) "Sufficiency of the-instituted means of Grace." Luke 16: 13
August 4, 1852. p. 704

44) "The relations between Baptist principles and political liberty."
(Address- Slash cottage, Hanover Co., VA)
July 5, 1852. p. 709

45) "The nature and tendency of Christian union." Eph. 4:5
March 2, 1852. p. 733

46) "Prayer alone is not obedience." Ex. 14:15
June 28, 1853. p. 744

47) "The Trinity." Matt. 18:19
August 5, 1855. p. 755

48) "The expansive genius of the Gospel." Rom. 11:1
February 2, 1852. p. 772

49) "Christ the way of life." John 14:6
June 4, 1842. p. 780

50) "Sanctifications. 1 Thess. 4:3
August 26, 1855. p. 783

51) "Duty of compliance with the invitations of the Spirit."
Hebrews 3:7,8
September 25, 1853. p. 816

52) "The sin of " Col. 3:9
December 14, 1856. p. 829

53) "The millennium." Rev. 20:1-10
April 9, 1854. p. 845

54) "Baptism -its mode, subjects, and design, as delivered to us by the
Apostles." 1 Cor. 11:2
Sept. 17, 1846. p. 892

55) "The sign of the times." Matt. 16:3
(Introduction to the General Association of Tenn. at Enon -Rutherford
County, TN)
October 28, 1846. p. 904

56) God's government over us is absolute in time and in eternity."
Rom. 14:7,8
December 6, 1846 p. 919

57) "Charge to the church in New Orleans at its organization."
January 27, 1844 p. 926

58) "Contemplation of Christ." Heb. 3:1

August 13, 1854. p. 928

59) "The Gospel." Tim. 1:11
October 4, 1846. p. 937

60) "Predestination." Eph. 1:3-13
August 22, 1852. p. 953

61) "The difference in the glory of the happy in heaven."
1 Cor. 15:41, 42
July 11, 1852 p. 1010

62) "The blessedness of doing good." Dan. 12:3
April 15, 1852. p. 1016

63) "The proof of religion from miracles."
John 11:47, 48
August 27, 1855. p. 1023

64) "Benevolence to the destitute and suffering is the glory of the
church." Mark 14:7
December 19, 1847. p. 1055.

65) "Contentment." Phil. 4:11
January 7, 1855. p. 1064.