



SOUTHWESTERN JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

FOUNDATIONS OF OUR FAITH

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

MALCOLM B. YARNELL III

Editor's Introduction

When the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary began to assist the local churches through training the next generation of Baptist ministers, it granted to its founder and to its first systematic theologian the responsibility for grounding the students in the fundamentals of orthodox theology. The lectures contained in this volume were originally delivered during that liminal period when the seminary was transitioning from its attachments to Baylor University of Waco, Texas in order to become the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary of Fort Worth, Texas. The founder of Southwestern Seminary, Benajah Harvey Carroll, was concerned that the Baptist churches of the southwestern United States were suffering from the introduction of “loose doctrines” and “a more menacing invasion of theological literature assailing the very foundations of the faith.” “In this way all popular religious thinking is being gradually leavened with hurtful teachings, as we regard them, on fundamental and vital doctrines, thus preparing the way for much confusion and trouble to the churches in the future.”¹

Carroll was very aware that ministers could have a positive or negative effect on the churches they would lead depending in great part upon the quality of training the ministers themselves received. And he was determined that these future ministers hear orthodox teaching on the “foundations of the faith” at Southwestern Seminary. Thus, as part of their first year of training, the students at the new seminary were required to receive twelve hours of systematic theology, and in the second year another four hours was also required in the sub-discipline of ecclesiology. There were, in addition, courses in New Testament, Old Testament, church history, apologetics, missions, Greek, Hebrew, homiletics, pastoral duties, polemics, religious pedagogy, and the history of preaching.² As an infidel who became a Christian and a Baptist after a deeply thoughtful conversion experience as a young veteran, and as the leading Bible expositor and Baptist controversialist in the southwest at the time, Carroll was superbly qualified

¹B.H. Carroll, “Opening Address before the Theological Department, Baylor University,” *Standard* (16 November 1905), 1ff, cited in Robert A. Baker, *Tell the Generations Following: A History of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1908–1983* (Nashville: Broadman, 1983), 122.

²*Ibid.*, 122–23.

both to begin the new seminary and to ground its doctrine systematically in the Word of God.³

Carroll assigned the important tasks of teaching systematic theology and ecclesiology to himself and to a trusted companion, Calvin Goodspeed, whose call to the new seminary began with its inception as Baylor Theological Seminary in 1905. Goodspeed is a less known figure compared to the towering Carroll and thus deserves some introduction here. A native of New Brunswick, Canada, Goodspeed received his theological training at Regent's Park College, when it was still based in London, England, prior to its move to Oxford. He then pursued further studies at Newton Theological Seminary and at the University of Leipzig, Germany. He served for many years as a pastor of churches in Ontario and New Brunswick, and as principal and professor of various schools in Canada. Although he can be classified as Southwestern's founding theologian, Goodspeed left the new Texas school in 1909,⁴ subsequent to its name change in 1908 but before its move to Fort Worth in 1910. Carroll grieved over Goodspeed's failing health, because it robbed Southwestern of "an abler and more judicious expounder" of both systematic theology and apologetics.⁵

The possible dates for the delivery of this lecture series in systematic theology can therefore be dated somewhere between 1905, when the seminary began, and 1909, when Goodspeed departed.⁶ The lecture series considers article-by-article "The Declaration of Faith" as recorded in the popular *Baptist Church Manual* of James Madison Pendleton. Pendleton's text in turn was a copy of the New Hampshire Confession of Faith, a "moderate Calvinist" or "non-Calvinist" Baptist confession that

³The most recent studies of Carroll's life and work include Alan J. Lefever, *Fighting the Good Fight: The Life and Work of Benajah Harvey Carroll* (Austin: Eakin, 1994); James Spivey, "Benajah Harvey Carroll," in *Theologians of the Baptist Tradition*, ed. Timothy George and David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), 163–80; and, idem, "Benajah Harvey Carroll (1843–1914), English Bible," in *The Legacy of Southwestern: Writings that Shaped a Tradition*, ed. James Leo Garrett Jr. (North Richland Hills: Smithfield, 2002), 1–17.

⁴Charles P. Johnson, "Goodspeed, Calvin," in *Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists* (Nashville: Broadman, 1985), 1:570.

⁵However, Goodspeed's departure was followed immediately by the arrival of Walter Thomas Conner at the school, who would become the leading theologian at Southwestern well into the twentieth century. Baker, *Tell the Generations Following*, 145.

⁶Previous editors dated the lectures more specifically to 1907–1908, but J.W. Crowder, the original compiler, does not mention a particular date. Cf. B.H. Carroll, "Our Articles of Faith: Art. I, The Scriptures," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 5.2 (1921): 3; B.H. Carroll, "Our Articles of Faith: Article 1—The Scriptures," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 44.3 (2002): 4; B.H. Carroll, "Baptist Church Polity and Articles of Faith" (Lectures Manuscript, Roberts Library, Fort Worth, Texas, 1957), ii.

first appeared in 1833.⁷ The trustees also adopted the New Hampshire Confession to serve as the seminary's articles of faith, and they were to be subscribed and adhered to by each of the faculty members at the school. When the Southern Baptist Convention was led to adopt a convention-wide confession in 1925, Lee Rutland Scarborough, Carroll's successor as president at Southwestern Seminary, was instrumental in having the New Hampshire Confession chosen as the basis of what is now the Baptist Faith and Message.

Carroll delivered the lectures for articles 1–9, 14, and 16 of the confession, and Goodspeed delivered the lectures for articles 10–12, 15, and 17–18. J.W. Crowder, a student then Professor of English Bible at the seminary, originally transcribed the lectures.⁸ Crowder's transcription was first utilized in the old series of the *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, which sporadically published some of the lectures between 1921 and 1924. Carroll's lecture on the first article was also published in the new series of this same journal in 2002, which originally forecast the publication of the remaining articles as part of the seminary's centennial celebration.⁹ These important lectures regarding the foundations of the Baptist faith are gathered here and published in one volume for the first time as a concluding part of the seminary's centennial celebrations. They remind us of the essentials of the faith of the Baptist seminary, which the trustees affirmed in 1914 was founded to teach "the fundamentals of our faith and . . . the doctrines of our Lord as enunciated by B.H. Carroll."¹⁰

The lectures will be a stimulus to current theological discussion at a number of levels. For instance, Carroll, unlike some later Baptists, is crystal clear that Baptists are indeed a creedal people. In his leading "General Discussion," he states, "There is a very great necessity for both creed and confession." He then demonstrates in both logical and practical ways why it is that he believes, "A church without a creed could not have gained my respect." Moreover, he argues that there should be some detail to one's creed: "Now, the bigger your creed, the better; and the less creed you have, the less account you are." Another instance concerns Carroll's view of the Bible, which is simultaneously subtle and conservative. Speaking later about Carroll's doctrine of inspiration, the eloquent and powerful Dallas

⁷On the character and development of the New Hampshire Confession of Faith, see William L. Lumpkin, *Baptist Confessions of Faith*, rev. ed. (Valley Forge: Judson, 1969), 360–61.

⁸Carroll, "Baptist Church Polity and Articles of Faith."

⁹Carroll, "Our Articles of Faith," 4–13.

¹⁰Cited in Franklin M. Segler, "B.H. Carroll: Model for Ministers," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 25.2 (1983): 21.

pastor George W. Truett confessed, "I am more indebted to him for my reverence for God's holy Word than I am any other human being."¹¹

Of some contemporary interest will also be Carroll's extensive discussions upon the controverted issue of the doctrine of salvation. There will be much here to encourage the simple Biblicist, while those desiring to go beyond the witness of Scripture in their soteriological speculations will be sorely disappointed about how Carroll correlates divine grace with human responsibility. At some point, every theologian must proclaim with Carroll in humility, "We know the imparting of life [in regeneration] is beyond our comprehension." On the other hand, where Scripture speaks, Carroll chose to speak with force. He was convinced that the biblical gospel must be proclaimed to everyone and that sinners were immediately responsible for repenting and believing in that good news. He was not afraid to state that sin and hell must be preached alongside grace and faith, and he lamented the fact that such convicting preaching was beginning to wane in his day.

Carroll and Goodspeed address many other issues, doctrinal and practical, from a biblical perspective with an eye toward scholarly and churchly trends. They spoke in ways that are still catching in their frankness and rhetorical power. For instance, Carroll argued that open communion was a theological error: "If anything has ever been settled in religious controversy, it has been settled that no man should be received to church membership nor to the communion unless he has been baptized." Those who would dissent from this settled fundamental of the Baptist faith are "only" a "few cranky Baptists." Ultimately, Carroll falls back on the position that we must practice baptism by immersion of believers only and closed communion because these are the Lord's commands. It is not up to anybody to abrogate the Lord's commands and the apostolic witness in these matters. "I would not think of giving a rule to some other man where he should put his table and if I would not think of giving such a rule to a man, certainly I have not the hardihood to tell the Lord Jesus Christ where He must put His table. If it is the Lord's table the Lord must determine the terms of admission."

From the doctrine of God to the relationship between the church and the state, there are countless other theological, practical, and homiletical jewels located in these lectures as presented by these giants of the faith. We hope later generations will benefit from the republication of their biblical insights. This issue will be invaluable for those involved in the field of historical theology, but the greatest benefits may come from those Christians desiring an accessible introduction to orthodox theology and

¹¹George W. Truett, "Introduction," in B.H. Carroll, *Inspiration of the Bible* (New York: Revell, 1930), 9; cited in *ibid.*, 4.

church polity. The systematic ruminations of Carroll and Goodspeed will find repeated utility in the hands of the pastor-theologian as well as the academic scholar.

(Editor's Note: The lecture transcripts have been brought into accordance with modern style guidelines, leaving their substance unaltered. There are a few points where the transcript has been corrected to what was more likely the original oral statement of Carroll and Goodspeed, but these typically involve a slight alteration in word or punctuation, and none render a substantive change in the meaning of the text. While seeking grammatical clarity, I have retained the spoken nature of the lectures, including contemporary illustrations, colloquialisms, the archaic mode of quoting Scripture, and other spoken mannerisms. Numerous biblical citations, absent in the transcript, have also been provided, with the caveat that the lecturers were involved not only in recitation but also interpretation. Some content footnotes have been added as aids to the reader in understanding matters peculiar to the early twentieth century or relevant to the broader flow of Christian history. Lectures republished from the old series have their volume and issue number printed at the end of each lecture herein.)

Malcolm B. Yarnell III