

Sermons
and
Life Sketch
of
B.H. Carroll, D.D.

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American Baptist Publication Society

1701 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

A Baptist Historical Resource
Published by the Center for Theological Research
at www.BaptistTheology.org

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Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Fort Worth, Texas
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LIFE SKETCH OF B. H. CARROLL

J. B. CRANFILL

THERE are not many genuinely great men. To be gifted is a great endowment; but gifts are not graces. Some of the most gifted of men have possessed none of the elements of real greatness. It is only when depth of intellect and breadth of attainment are combined with greatness of heart and gentleness of spirit that there is real greatness.

Dr. B. H. Carroll is, in the highest, broadest, and best sense of the term, a genuinely great man. In his gifts he towers a very giant among his fellows, while in the breadth of learning and research he ranks with the profoundest scholars of the time. But crowning all is his great heart-power, his gentleness and humility, and his consideration for the feelings of others. These graces, so unobtrusive, yet so conspicuous to those of us who have been near him and shared his confidence, empathize his likeness to that disciple whom Jesus loved.

Those who read the sermons in this book cannot fail to be impressed with the further fact that Doctor Carroll is a great theologian. His theological views are clear, and ring out with sharp distinctness. On a theological proposition he is as strong as any of the great writers of our denomination, and these have been among the greatest.

No matter how much the reader may be impressed, however, with Doctor Carroll's gifts, his learning, his eloquence, or his clear statements of vital doctrines, let it not be forgotten that he is greater in his home life, in his loyalty to principle, in his whole-hearted support of our organized denominational work, and in his fidelity to his friends, than in all the other things combined.

Doctor Carroll is of Irish descent, on the paternal side at least. His great-grandfather, Jesse Carroll, came over directly from Ireland, and after a short stay in Virginia, settled in what is now called Sampson County, North Carolina. He had three sons, John, Thomas, and Joseph. One of these sons, John Carroll, was the grandfather of the subject of this sketch. His father, Rev. Benajah Carroll, married Miss Mary Eliza Mallad. He was the rover of the family. His first move was to Carroll County, Mississippi, and subsequently he moved to Drew County, Arkansas. In December, 1858, he moved to Burlison County, Texas.

Benajah Harvey Carroll, the subject of this sketch, was born near Carrollton, Carroll County, Mississippi, December 27, 1843. His father's family consisted of twelve children, all of whom are now dead, except Rev. J. M. Carroll and himself. Another of his brothers, Francis Wayland, was likewise a Baptist preacher.

Several of Doctor Carroll's cousins have been Baptist preachers: J. L. Carroll, of North Carolina; E. B. Carroll, of Georgia; Laban Carroll, of South Carolina; C.V. Carroll, of Texas. His second son, C. C. Carroll, pastor at Ocala, Florida, is one of the Baptist leaders of that State, and is both a poet and an orator. His oldest son, B. H. Carroll, Jr., is the best scholar in the family, an A. M. of Baylor University, TH. D. of the Southern Baptist

Theological Seminary, PH. D. of Berlin University, and now on the staff of the "Houston (Texas) Chronicle." He bids fair to be one of the leading journalists of the South.

Burleson County, Texas, was the home of Doctor Carroll until 1869, at which time he moved to Waco, Texas. He was educated at old Baylor University, at Independence, Texas. After finishing his course, he taught school for some months. As a schoolboy he helped to raise the last star-spangled banner that ever floated on a Texas breeze before the dark period of the civil war. On that occasion he made one of the grandest speeches of his life. It was delivered from a dry-goods box on the streets of Independence, in the presence of an immense and incensed crowd of secessionists fire-eaters. It was as a flame of fire in eloquence, and as a ponderous trip-hammer in logic. It showed the folly and predicated the failure of the secession of the South, and its ruin. It closed with the famous poem of Cutter, paraphrasing the words of Henry Clay in his Bunker Hill oration:

You ask me when I'd rend the scroll our fathers' names are written o'er,
When I could see our flag unroll its mingled stars and stripes no more;
When with a worse than felon hand or felon counsels I would sever
The union of this glorious land? I answer: Never! Never!

Notwithstanding his deep convictions on preserving the integrity of the Union, when the secession convention which carried Texas out of the Union called for a regiment of rangers to protect the frontier, he mustered into the Confederate service at San Antonio, April 15, 1861.

His service as a Texas ranger covered a period of a year, which was filled with thrilling adventure and many exposures to danger. Western Texas was at that time a wilderness, the home of wild animals and savage Indians; but with that courage and manliness which has ever characterized him, he did his duty faithfully and well, and won the esteem and plaudits of his comrades and his superiors. In the spring of 1862 he joined the Seventeenth Regiment of Texas Infantry at Austin, of which R. T. P. Allen was commanding colonel. The regiment was attached to McCullough's Brigade of Walker's Division.

Soon after mustering into the service he delivered a speech at Monticello, Arkansas, on "The Delusions of the South." These delusions were set forth as follows: (1) Speedy victory of the Confederate armies; (2) cowardice of Northern troops; (3) reliance on Northern Democrats; (4) reliance on European intervention.

Later on he held a camp-fire debate in Louisiana, on the "Effect of the Fall of Vicksburg." This speech was a negative reply to the affirmative: "We'll Whip 'em Yet." Its exordium commenced: "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera." So the Fourth of July fights against us. In one disastrous day it gives us Lee's repulse at Gettysburg, Holmes' repulse at Helena, and the downfall of Vicksburg. The Confederacy is as much divided as if the Father of Waters were a river of fire. All the Trans-Mississippi department is eliminated from the conflict. We can witness, but not relieve the dying agonies of the States beyond the river."

Another one of his camp-fire debates was held in Louisiana, in which he replied to a speech charging that "Grant is no general." The exordium of this speech commenced: "Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad. It is madness to underestimate the talents and resources of an enemy. Fort Donelson, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga are

witnesses to Grant's generalship, whose testimony is unanswerable and ineffaceable. The campaign resulting in the investment of Vicksburg will rank in generalship and strategy with the most brilliant achievements of Bonaparte in Italy. Another witness testifies 'He is a great general who attracts to himself or who develops great subordinates.' Sherman, Logan, McPherson, Sheridan, and Thomas cluster around Grant. My friends, I dread this man's cool, self-poised, everlasting, bulldog persistence."

The last and perhaps most notable of all his camp-fire debates was delivered in Louisiana on this proposition: "Resolved, That Confederate success is more to be dreaded than their defeat." In this debate he had the affirmative. He commenced: "Mr. President, I base all my argument on one compound proposition. If we are defeated, the war is ended; but if we succeed, war is perpetual. The perpetuity of war in case of our success inevitably follows, from four causes, namely: (1) The Mississippi and its tributaries; (2) the interminable artificial boundary between the North and South; (3) the protection of slavery under such conditions; (4) the rope of sand binding the Confederate States."

Doctor Carroll served through the war, being severely wounded in the battle of Mansfield, Louisiana.

He was converted in the summer of 1865, at a Methodist camp-meeting in Burleson County, as indicated in the opening discourse of this volume. He was married to Miss Ellen Bell, who had recently moved from Starkville, Mississippi, to Burleson County, in June, 1866. His marriage was of God. She was indeed her husband's helpmeet. On her tomb at Waco is the inscription: "The heart of her husband did safely trust in her." The living children of this marriage are B. H. Carroll, Jr., C. C. Carroll, Katherine Carroll, and Mrs. Annie Louise Josey. Let it be said of Ellen Bell Carroll, mother of these children, that had it not been for her faithful, constant, loving, and efficient help to the preacher of these sermons and the compiler of this volume, this work could not have been given to the world in this present form. She was one of the noblest, most practical, and industrious Christian women it has ever been my privilege to know.

Doctor Carroll was ordained to the gospel ministry soon after his marriage. He preached and taught school in Burleson County until the fall of 1869. January, 1870, he was called as assistant pastor of the First Baptist Church, Waco, Texas, where he was pastor almost thirty years. He was called as pastor January 1, 1871. His pastorate at Waco was a remarkable one in more than one particular, but space forbids extended mention of it here. It is well worth while however, for our preachers who are constantly seeking new fields of labor to ponder well the great strength and usefulness of a pastorate stretching over more than a quarter of a century.

In politics, Doctor Carroll's father was an old-line Whig, and his political textbooks when a child were "The Federalist," "The Madison Papers," the lives of Henry Clay and Daniel Webster.

He was, as before stated, very earnestly opposed to secession. He is, and always has been, a Democrat. The writer of this sketch has often tried to convince him that he ought to align himself with the Prohibition party; and hopes yet that he may come into the kingdom, but he still affiliates with the Democratic party. While Doctor Carroll has never been affiliated with the Prohibition party as a political movement, he has always been a warm, earnest, aggressive, and active opponent of the liquor traffic, and in every instance where the matter has been agitated, he has championed the cause of prohibition in all of its phases.

When the Legislature of the State of Texas submitted the prohibition amendment to a vote of the people in 1887, Doctor Carroll was at once looked to for leadership in the campaign, and was elected chairman of the State Prohibition Executive Committee. He entered vigorously into the campaign, with tongue and pen, delivering speeches all over Texas, and giving himself up to campaign work. On July 4 of that year, he held his memorable debate with Hon. Roger Q. Mills, who was championing the anti-prohibition cause. The debate was held at Waco, and will never be forgotten by those who heard it. The opponents of prohibition were so demoralized by Doctor Carroll's resistless logic, keen sarcasm, and towering eloquence, that Mr. Mills, their leader, entirely lost his temper, and several others with him.

Not only were his speeches characterized by great earnestness, logic, and convincing power, but his written campaign articles were fully as strong as his addresses. Notable among these was his reply to an open letter of Governor Ross, which was published as a campaign circular. This is by many believed to be the ablest single article ever written by Doctor Carroll. It certainly was very far-reaching in its effect for good. Although the cause of prohibition was defeated, Doctor Carroll has since stood firm as adamant on that question, never losing an opportunity to show his truceless hostility to the liquor traffic as a whole and in all its parts.

The next notable campaign in which Doctor Carroll engaged was the one for the payment of the harassing debt on Baylor University, Waco. After having been released for three months from pastoral work, he entered the campaign, and together with the financial secretary of the institution, Rev. Geo. W. Truett, raised in cash within a few months the entire debt of the school, amounting to more than eighty thousand dollars.

Thus the impossible was made possible, and one of the most important Baptist educational institutions in the country was forever saved to the denomination.

The third notable campaign in Doctor Carroll's life was made in the summer of 1894. On account of conditions not necessary to mention here, the Texas State Mission Board found itself seven thousand dollars in debt in the hardest time of the year, and only three months intervening between that time and the State Convention. For the debt to remain unpaid meant chaos and ruin to organized effort in Texas for years to come. Doctor Carroll, with that keen foresight peculiar to him, and inspired by that same devotion to Christ which has been the guiding star of his life, was at his request again released by his church from active pastoral work, and entered the field in the interest of the State Mission Board. Not only was the seven thousand dollars raised, but there was a balance in the treasury when the secretary made his report at the ensuing State Convention.

The fourth notable campaign was his redemption of all our correlated schools from debt. In this campaign he raised half a million dollars.

The fifth campaign lasted only six weeks, during which time he raised thirty thousand dollars for an emergency fund to support the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary for three years.

His sixth campaign lasted forty-eight days, in which he raised fifty five thousand dollars endowment for this seminary.

His seventh campaign is being conducted this summer—1908—for increase of endowment. Before commencing it he delivered a series of Bible lectures at each of the

following places: Roswell, New Mexico; Lake Ponchartrain, Louisiana; Lampasas, Texas; Plainview Texas; Ewing, Illinois; and Eureka Springs, Arkansas.

One of the greatest characteristics of Doctor Carroll is the fact that he has always been active in his co-operation with all our organized denominational work. He has never been a splitter, but always a builder, and stands unflinchingly by our Boards and secretaries and educational institutions.

One of the many notable public addresses of Doctor Carroll to which reference has not heretofore been made, was his speech before the Southern Baptist Convention at Richmond, Virginia, on the "Wisdom of Mission Work in Texas." The speech revolutionized the minds of a great many of the delegates on the importance of mission work in this vast field. His speech before the National Educational Society, at Birmingham, Alabama, in 1891, on the "Needless Multiplication of Colleges," is regarded by many as the strongest deliverance on that subject extant. His centennial address before the Southern Baptist Convention, at Atlanta, on "Home Missions in America for One Hundred Years," was published as a campaign document by the Home Board, and in the interest of the centennial work. Others of his great speeches are an address on "Papal Fields," delivered before the Southern Baptist Convention, at Nashville, and his memorial address on the death of Spurgeon, before the Ministers' institute, at Nashville. The latter address appears in this book of sermons. His lecture on "S. S. Prentiss," delivered at Cameron, Texas, as well as his address on "Our Fathers in Education," delivered in many Texas cities during the Baylor University campaign, have been widely approved and are universally regarded by those familiar with them as invaluable contributions to the current literature of the time on these topics.

Doctor Carroll has held two religious debates. One of these was held in 1872 with Dr. O. Fisher, a Methodist preacher, at Davilla, Texas, on "The Action and Subjects of Water Baptism," and on the "Nature and Design of Baptism in the Spirit." The other was with Doctor Wilmeth, a disciple of Alexander Campbell, on the "Order of Repentance and Faith," the "Design of Baptism," and the "Setting Up of the Kingdom." Both of these debates were reported in full at the time. I shall never forget the plan of his debate with Doctor Wilmeth. He wrote out twenty questions, which he asked Doctor Wilmeth to answer in writing. Doctor Wilmeth took to this matter very kindly, and answered all the questions in writing, as requested. With these questions and answers, Doctor Carroll absolutely annihilated him in the debate. He remarked to me once, smilingly, that he did not care how Doctor Wilmeth answered the questions—that he was ruined whether he answered them in the affirmative or the negative.

Doctor Carroll never attended any theological seminary, but has ever been a profound student of systematic theology. He is an omnivorous reader, having averaged two hundred and fifty pages a day for forty-eight years. The remarkable thing about his reading, moreover, is that he remembers what he reads. He has the most marvelous retentive memory of any man I have ever known. He can lucidly give every pertinent fact concerning any book that he read a quarter of a century ago, and has not opened since. Doubtless to this one faculty is due a large degree of that wide knowledge of history and literature which has added so much to Doctor Carroll's strength as a lecturer and preacher. He is thoroughly familiar with both ancient and modern history, and his knowledge of the Scriptures is truly marvelous.

Doctor Carroll will be sixty-five years old December 27, 1908. He is now the president of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. His present wife was Miss Hallie Harrison, daughter of Gen. Thomas Harrison, of Waco. She is a Christian woman of the highest type. Her sweetness of spirit and gentleness of heart, together with her strong good sense and her devotion to God, conspire to nobly equip her as the wife of the subject of this sketch. She takes a hearty and highly intelligent interest in the work that is so near to her husband's heart, and in all he undertakes she is a helpmeet and companion in the highest sense of those beautiful words. Of this marriage there is one son, Francis Harrison Carroll, seven years old, who bids fair to equal any member of the family from either the paternal or the maternal side.

Doctor Carroll is now in the zenith of his power in every way, and I know many thousands will join in the prayer that God will spare him to our denomination until, at a ripe old age, crowned with years and honors, he is gathered to his fathers.

The establishment of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary is Doctor Carroll's latest and grandest work. The matriculations for the third year, ending June 24, 1908, were one hundred and ninety preachers, the graduating class, seventeen.

Doctor Carroll's power as a theologian, and his method of lecturing appears from the recent address before the Southern Baptist Convention at Hot Springs, Arkansas, on the "Nature and Person of our Lord, and His Relations to the Father, the Universe, and the Church." By request of the Convention, this address is now being published in pamphlet form.

Doctor Carroll has now on hand, ready for publication, material sufficient to make five additional volumes, and I sincerely trust that they will soon be given to the world. He is one of the world's greatest living Baptists.

DALLAS, TEXAS, August 15, 1908.