

THE
TEN
COMMANDMENTS

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B.H. CARROLL

The Ten Commandments by B. H. Carroll

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PREFACE TO B. H. CARROLL'S
INTERPRETATION OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Tom J. Nettles

The Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists has this brief resume of the teaching history of A. H. Newman: "Rochester Seminary, 1877–81; McMaster University, Toronto; Baylor University, 1901–1907; Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1907–1913; Baylor University, 1913–1921." He served in other University settings as visiting professor, including Chicago, Vanderbilt, and Mercer. Why did his stint at Southwestern end in 1913?

Frederick Eby, in *Newman, The Church Historian*, gives a gripping narrative of the relation between Carroll and Newman from the Baylor days through the Southwestern days—1901–1913.¹ He discusses the strengths of both men—their admiration for each other, their "phenomenal capacity of memory," their "spiritual kin-

1 Frederick Eby, *Newman, The Church Historian* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1946), 51–61. The next two paragraphs depend on the narrative of Eby in these pages.

ship,” their capacity for human kindness, their “warm-hearted, evangelical religious experience,” and their complementary strengths. He is virtually celebrative in his admiration of the mental and literary acumen of both men. He also points to significant distinctions between them in personality, education, oratorical appeal, theories of instruction, and views of scholarship. Newman’s strength with the pen in service of research was matched by Carroll’s strength of presentation in service of persuasion. Carroll was “a man of ponderous mentality and mammoth personality ... and ... had an inflexible system of theology which had much of the character of medieval scholasticism.” Newman “knew the shifting nature of philosophic and scientific thought too well to risk the dangers of an oversimplified dogmatism.”

His perception of these ultimately diverse and fatal differences makes the eventual parting of ways understandable. Eby makes a mistake, however, in giving the occasion of Newman’s exit from Southwestern. He said that it occurred after the death of Carroll in light of an encroaching intensity of conservatism—“even more conservative than he [Carroll] had sought to make it”—incompatible with Newman’s temperament as well as his kind of spirituality and academic/pedagogical style. In fact, however, Newman resigned in 1913, and Carroll did not die until November of 1914. Carroll had become ill and weak and had relinquished some of the academic administration to his Dean—Newman—who immediately sought some gradual innovations in the curriculum. Among these was a demotion of the classes in interpretation of the English Bible to be replaced with more emphasis on original languages and exegetical studies based on those. Upon learning of this attempted alteration of the core of the curriculum, Carroll wrote Newman re-

questing his resignation; Newman responded with a resignation letter containing subtle hints of his sense of academic superiority to Carroll.²

Carroll was determined that the course in English Bible remain untouched. He viewed such a study as most practicable for the great mass of preachers whose background and obligations would not allow them to delay a thorough study of the Bible until their linguistic prowess had matured. A study of the whole word of God was “primal, elemental, vital, and fundamental” to every Christian but “intensely obligatory upon the mind and heart of every preacher.” Although broad and wide literary attainment would greatly aid and support a more expansive advantage in such a study, they were not prerequisite. “The one prerequisite,” therefore,” Carroll affirmed, “is ability to read and write in English, accompanied with a little common sense.”³

Carroll asked this question as he surveyed the needs of the churches and the preachers through Baptist history and at that time in the state of Texas. “Is there in all the world a school where all this Word of God is taught in the mother tongue of the people?” He answered his own question in the somber tones of a funeral dirge, “There is not one in the world!” He also observed the disturbing reality that “few preachers, learned or unlearned,

2 I have read the original text of both these letters in the handwriting of both men in the archives at The Southwestern Baptist theological Seminary.

3 B. H. Carroll, *Interpretation of the English Bible*, compiled by J. W. Crowder, ed. J. B. Cranfill, vol. 1 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1948; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), 6. Citations refer to the Baker Book House edition.

actually study the Bible itself, their supreme textbook, as a complete and well-ordered system of divine truth.” These observations about the academy and the church helped shape Carroll’s conviction of the necessity of a thorough and rigorous study of the English Bible.⁴

Is an emphasis on a thorough course in English Bible repressive of increased academic aptitude? No; quite the reverse. With this foundation of thorough acquaintance with the whole Word of God, the mind will be excited to more technical studies and deeper knowledge of the Word loved and trusted. Instead of stultifying the mind and prematurely satisfying it with such a survey of the Scripture in the mother tongue, the effect will be a hunger and thirst for ever-increasing knowledge and competency in teaching and preaching.

Carroll stated several assumptions that would govern the teaching of this course. He wrote of the necessary qualifications of the teacher, an ability to interact with and refute skeptical theories and alleged discrepancies in the text, a confidence in the accuracy of the transcription of the original texts from generation to generation, and that the English versions reflect “with substantial fidelity and accuracy” the Hebrew and Greek texts.⁵ One of these assumptions is fundamental to all others and to the justification for such a high aspiration. Carroll verbalized that assumption:

That the library of many books now contained in one book and called by us the Holy Bible, not only contains, but *is* the

4 Carroll, *Interpretation*, 1:11, 12.

5 Carroll, *Interpretation*, 1:7.

Word of God, and is both so necessary and complete in every part that it may not be subject to addition or subtraction, and that, being inspired of God throughout, it must remain to the end of the world as the sufficient, supreme, and infallible standard by which all human creed and conduct should be regulated in time, and by which they shall be judged at the last day.⁶

This course, therefore, in English Bible was at the root of the entire curriculum of the seminary. “The Bible is its own interpreter” was a principle to which Carroll unfailingly adhered throughout his exposition of the whole four-year course. It was to include every chapter and verse in the entire Bible, with recitation and instruction for one hour, four days a week for every school week with a recommended two hours of study each day.

Carroll’s works include 33 books. Many of these are books of collected sermons on particular themes such as *Revival Messages*, *Baptist and Their Doctrines*, *Inspiration of the Bible*, *Jesus the Christ*, and others. *Interpretation of the English Bible*, originally consisting of thirteen volumes until expanded and completed to seventeen from Genesis through Revelation, according to J. B. Cranfill, “will rank first in the wide reach of the informative discussions and lofty interpretations of our Scriptures.”⁷

This exposition of the Ten Commandments is

6 Carroll, *Interpretation*, 1:7.

7 J. B. Cranfill, foreword to B. H. Carroll, *Revival Messages*, compiled by J. W. Crowder, ed. by J. B. Cranfill (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1939).

lifted from the interpretation of Exodus in Carroll's seventeen-volume *Interpretation*. True to Carroll's purpose and exhibiting his wide and deep knowledge of the Bible and pertinent literature, this portion shows the truth of an early observation that "this work is an interpretation rather than a commentary in the popular acceptance of the latter term."⁸ The reader is led through the supportive scriptural parallels as the author traces out how the full witness of Scripture sheds light on each of the commandments. It becomes a biblical theology of the Law, a commentary on the ethical implications and applications of each commandment and of the commandments seen as a unit. It contributes to an understanding of the unitary theological dogma of Law and Gospel. Without ostentation, but with the most careful relevance in application, the reader becomes acquainted with the voluminous literary knowledge of B. H. Carroll. Every reader will profit personally in the sanctifying influence of the revealed standard of righteousness as well as in knowledge of vital biblical truth.

8 John L. Hill, foreword to *An Interpretation of the English Bible*, by B. H. Carroll, compiled by J. W. Crowder, ed. J. B. Cranfill, vol. 1 (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1948; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973).

B. H CARROLL: THE PARADIGM OF ORTHODOXY

Tom J. Nettles

On November 11, 1914, a daily newspaper in Waco announced, "Dr. B. H. Carroll, for 29 years pastor of the First Baptist church of Waco, died this morning at 1 o'clock at his residence in Fort Worth. He became pastor of the First Baptist Church here in 1871, resigning in 1900 to take the chair of Bible instruction at Baylor University, which position he held until the organization of the Baptist Theological Seminary at Ft Worth, of which he was made president." He actually resigned as pastor on the first Sunday night in 1899.

Within a week of Carroll's death, the seminary trustees made their report to the Texas convention in a sense of sincere mourning: "No greater sorrow could afflict, nor heavier loss be sustained by this Seminary than by the death of Dr. Carroll." The report highlighted Carroll's relationship to the seminary; "It was born in his loving heart, and has grown up to its present strength feeding on his heart's blood. It is his dearest spiritual offspring. It is the crowning work of his last years. He has stamped it with his matchless character. Through it his great soul will be projected during the remainder of time and all eternity. It is the last diadem which his

deft hand formed for the crown of his Redeemer." They intensified their sense of loss and Carroll's unique gifts and unwavering stewardship in saying, "Your board, feeling the almost unbearable sense of their loss, would here make record of their gratitude to God for his gift to us and the world of this great preacher, peerless teacher, and unmatched interpreter of God's Word." Unintimidated by any possible accusation of saying too much, they continued, "The memory of his great loving spirit abides on us as a Heavenly benediction. His teachings, his sermons, his life, the work of his hands, will abide to bless many generations."¹

His devoted and admiring friend, J. B. Cranfill, wrote for *The Dallas News*, "The greatest Baptist in the world is dead. On Wednesday morning, November 11, on Seminary Hill at Fort Worth, the spirit of the most majestic man the Baptists of the world have known in the generation swept into the gates eternal."² Cranfill went on to mark the lives of several prominent and heroic persons in the history of Christian advancement and then emphasized, "But in gentleness of heart, breadth of intellect, eloquence of utterance, depth of learning, knowledge of the Word of God, leadership among the hosts of Zion,

1 Baptist General Convention of Texas, *Proceedings*, 1914: 14.

2 J. B. Cranfill, *From Memory* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1937), 149.

singleness of purpose, purity of life, strength of conviction, fidelity to God's Word, and sweep of intellectual power, none of these excelled the immortal B. H. Carroll, whose kingly life was given wholly, self-sacrificingly and without reserve, to the Lone Star State."³ One would want to add, "to the glory of God, the defense of the faith, and the securing of an ongoing and informed witness to the truth of divine revelation."

When his brother, J. M. Carroll reported on a speech that B. H. Carroll made for The Endowment of Baptist Education, he said, "It was eloquence on fire. It seemed almost enough to raise the dead."⁴ Concerning his preaching, the great George W. Truett said, "As a preacher, he seemed to be in a class all to himself. The pulpit was his throne and he occupied it like a king."⁵ J. B. Gambrell wrote, "President B. H. Carroll had the most capacious mind I have met in my life. ... He was an intellectual Colossus. ... His commanding eloquence made him a favorite preacher anywhere he went. His surpassing knowledge of the Scriptures, with his genius for interpretation, made him irresistible."⁶

3 Cranfill, 150.

4 J. M. Carroll, *History of Texas Baptists* (Dallas: Baptist Standard Publishing Company, 1923), 846.

5 George W. Truett, "B. H. Carroll, The Titanic Champion of Truth" in J. M. Carroll, B. H. Carroll: The Colossus of Baptist History (www.solidchristianbooks.com: 2015), 86.

6 J. B. Gambrell, "The Home Going of President Carroll:

Such uncommon encomiums from human lips were common when it came to evaluations of B. H. Carroll's ministry, mind, spirit, vision, talent at fund-raising, preaching, eloquence, doctrinal fortitude and astuteness, and invincible determination.

B. H. Carroll was born in Mississippi in Carroll County on December 27, 1843. His father supported the family through farming, but his true passion and work for life was preaching the gospel as a Baptist minister. Benajah was his father's name, and that mantle also fell on his son, Benajah Harvey Carroll. His mother was Mary Eliza Mallard Carroll. She was reared Presbyterian, was catechized as a child, and put into the mind and conscience of her children the value of early and precise knowledge of biblical doctrine. B. H. said concerning the biblical mandate to give religious instruction to children, "The Presbyterians excel the Baptists, I am sorry to say. My mother was a Presbyterian. They make mighty good Baptists when you get them to come over. I learned the Presbyterian idea of family instruction from my mother."⁷

The family moved to Arkansas in 1848. At some point during these days, in the excitement of a protracted meeting and under the "pressure of well-meant but unwise persuasion," Carroll was enlisted as a candidate for baptism, along with many others.⁸ He knew then that

An Appreciation," in *Colossus*, 90, 91.

7 B. H. Carroll, *An Interpretation of the English Bible: Exodus, Leviticus*, New and Complete edition (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1948; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), 170. Citations refer to the Baker Book House edition.

8 B. H. Carroll, "My Infidelity and What Became of It," in *The*

if what he experienced was conversion, then the entire fabric of conversion so-called was a charade. “Walking home from the baptism,” Carroll recalled, “the revelation came.” What revelation—a word of assurance concerning his status as a child of God? No; quite the reverse. “The vague infidelity of all the past took positive shape, and would not down at my bidding.” Knowing that his answers to the evangelist’s questions had been mere rote, he knew that he “did not believe that the Bible was God’s revelation” nor the reality of “its miracles and doctrines” or the “divinity or vicarious suffering of Jesus.” He “had no confidence in professed conversion and regeneration,” and had never felt lost nor saved.⁹

Within two years of this clear-headed assumption of doctrinal infidelity, in 1858, his family moved to Burleson County, Texas. He sought to separate himself from church membership but was persuaded to retain membership for further examination. The next year, at sixteen years of age, Carroll began college studies at Baylor University, then operating from Independence, Texas. He read many books on infidelity and apologetics while keeping a thick regimen of reading class materials. Just before the secession of Texas from the Union, B. H. Carroll made a speech in Independence opposing secession and predicting the failure and ruin of the South. Nevertheless, when the Civil War came, he interrupted his college course and joined the Texas Rangers in 1861. He was in a force assigned to the Texas frontier, where they sought to hold at bay the terrorism of the Comanche

B. H. Carroll Pulpit, ed. Adam Greenway (Fort Worth: Seminary Hill Press, 2021), 5.

9 *Pulpit*, 5.

Indians. In a quick visit home to attend to his father, who was near death, Carroll married Ophelia Crunk on December 13, 1861. When it was time for him to return to McCullough's Rangers on the Texas frontier, she refused to go with him. He returned to his military duty alone. When he learned that she had been unfaithful, he was granted a divorce by jury. This was done on November 9, 1863.¹⁰

Under severe distress and under the power of a desire to die, he made public his rejection of the religious training of his mother and father and severed ties with the church in Caldwell. After his year of service on the frontier, Carroll joined the Seventeenth Texas Infantry Regiment. He wrote concerning his short marriage and divorce, "But now came another event. I shall not name it. It came from no sin on my part, but it blasted every hope and left me in Egyptian darkness. The battle of life was lost. In seeking the field of war, I sought death."¹¹

He almost found it. After engaging in the heat of fiery conflict in several battles, he was severely wounded in Mansfield, Louisiana, in April of 1864. His thigh was pierced by a Minié ball that went between the thigh bone

10 See Robert A. Baker, *Tell the Generations Following: A History of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1908–1983* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1983), 105, 106. Baker cites the legal records in the office of the District Clerk, Burleson County, Caldwell, Texas. Though he had access to it, Baker does not cite the name of the girl; James T. Spivey gives this information in "Benajah Harvey Carroll," in *The Legacy of Southwestern: Writings that Shaped a Tradition*, ed. James Leo Garrett (North Richland Hills, Texas: Smithfield Press, 2002), 1–4. This is noted in the *B. H. Carroll Pulpit*, "Introduction," xii.

11 *Pulpit*, 6.

and the femoral artery. His brother Laban carried him for two miles beyond the field of battle. He eventually found him a cottage, with the approval of the officers, where a gentle southern home welcomed them both. Eventually, B. H., called Harvey, was sent home for recuperation.

Far worse than the danger and turmoil of soul engendered by the Civil War was the unremitting assault on Carroll's mind in his odyssey for constructive and integrative truth. During this time of recuperation from the wound received in battle, Carroll wrote a poem on April 10, 1864, expressing the distress of his mind as he groped for some light concerning the claims of the Bible in relation to his settled skepticism. The last two stanzas reveal much of the content of his struggle.

And if I cannot then believe,
(For reason will not man deceive)
Am I cut off from all reprieve
And damned for all eternity?

Therefore I ask in suppliant tone
By hope that's lost and miseries won,
Is Jesus Christ, Our Lord, thy son?
Reveal this hidden mystery.¹²

He began to discover that all of his infidel and naturalistic philosophers had nothing to build up a heart. He was surprised he had not perceived this earlier. "How could I have been so blind to it?" he asked himself. "These philosophies, one and all, were mere negations. They were destructive, but not constructive. They overturned, and overturned, and overturned; but, as my soul liveth, they built up nothing under the whole heaven in the place of

12 *Colossus*, 165.

what they destroyed.”¹³

His father had died believing him lost; his mother continued to pray and encourage; she convinced him to attend a Methodist camp meeting in the fall of 1865. He stood on the outskirts of the tent, leaning on his crutches. He belittled the simple preacher, thoroughly convinced that conversion and all implied in it was unsustainable intellectually. When the minister finished—“a failure even for him”—rather than finishing with a flurry of exhortations, he asked several probing questions, challenging his hearers to a trial based on John 7:17 and Hosea 6:3. Carroll considered this a fair proposition, and he determined that he “was willing to persist in subjection to the test until a true solution could be found.”¹⁴

Another evening of struggle and increasingly earnest solicitation and the observation of the quiet and joyful confidence of eternal life exhibited in the singing by some women of long and recent faith ushered in the startling clarity of forgiven sin through the death of Christ. In his exposition of “The School of the Prophets” in *The Hebrew Monarchy*, Carroll recalled the impact of that song, “O Land of Rest for thee I sigh.” “I can’t sing myself,” he confessed, “but I can carry the tunes in my mind, and I can be more influenced by singing than by preaching. It was singing that convicted me of sin. It was on a waving, soaring melody of song that my soul was converted.”¹⁵ Infidelity and doubt were gone; freedom of conscience, satisfaction of mind, and joy of spirit re-

13 *Pulpit*, 6

14 *Pulpit*, 8

15 Carroll, *The Hebrew Monarchy*, 36.

placed distress of soul, confusion of mind, and the shadow of death. An evening spent with *Pilgrim's Progress* at the bedside of his spiritually elated mother saw Christian travel through Beulah Land away from Doubting Castle and Giant Despair and enter the celestial city by morning light.

Carroll was a new man. Like the apostle Paul, his extensive knowledge of Scripture and carefully constructed objections to the central claims of Christology and redemption, as well as the inspiration of Scripture itself, turned their power into an onslaught on unbelief and a deluge of doctrinal, apologetic, polemical, and edificatory discussions, sermons, and writings. He was baptized within days by a former Baylor respected antagonist, W. W. ("Spurgeon") Harris, and received into membership in the Caldwell church. He immediately sensed a call to preach. His church, from which he had been excluded upon his request in October 1865, ordained him to gospel ministry in May 1866.

On December 28, 1866, he married Ellen Virginia Bell. Not a Christian at the time of their wedding, soon she was soundly converted during a revival meeting under the preaching of her new husband. They had eight children. Their first daughter died before she was three; the next two children, also daughters, died within their first year. Another child, a boy, died before he was two. A boy, Benajah Harvey, their fourth child, received a Ph.D., was a well-known journalist, and served as United States consul at Venice. Charles Chauncy Carroll, according to the *Waco Times Herald*, served as pastor of the First Baptist church at Owensboro, Ky. The *Houston Post* reported that he was the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Winchester, Ky. A daughter, Kate, married

E. O. Temple Piers and served with him as a missionary in Sao Paulo, Brazil. His younger daughter, Louise, married J. D. Josey of Victoria, Texas. She died in 1963. After attempts at teaching school along with farming and preaching in small churches, Carroll resigned when a promised stipend of \$800 per year for his labors was not paid. Also, having seen his best efforts at farming spectacularly ruined by weather, in the spring of 1869, he pledged, "Come weal or woe, I shall give myself wholly to preaching the gospel."¹⁶ Carroll became pastor at New Hope Baptist Church in Goat Neck, Texas, in fall of 1869. In 1870, he also began to preach twice monthly at First Baptist Church in Waco which called him as pastor in March 1871. He stayed as pastor of that church for 28 years until he resigned on the first Sunday of 1899. His wife had died on November 6, 1897, and his distress over that and his sense of loneliness probably made him open to a new adventure in ministry where the years of experience in many different contexts could be harnessed for an expansive and unifying influence among Texas Baptists. Also, his knowledge of the several "preacher-boys" who heard him preach at First Baptist in Waco fueled his desire for more directed and purposeful education for the Baptist ministry.

Immediately in 1899, Carroll corralled his energy, experience, and love for Baptists, particularly Texas Baptists, and feeling ever more keenly the need for the education of ministers, he began to lead a great Texas-wide campaign to secure financial stability for all the Baptist educational institutions in Texas. In 1900, Carroll married Hallie Harrison of Waco, who taught music at Baylor University. Her father was Confederate Gen-

16 *Colossus*, 73.

eral Thomas Harrison. Words of love to her were the last words B. H. Carroll spoke, and her face was the last thing on earth that he saw. She died in 1938. Their son, Harrison Kerfoot Carroll, born in 1901, died in 1972 in Los Angeles, California.

From 1899–1903, Carroll gave his life to the Education commission and then turned his attention to a specific kind of education—theological education. He began working both by teaching, fund-raising, providing trustee oversight of the theological department at Baylor. In the fall of 1905, that department became “Baylor Theological Seminary.”

By November 1907, under the influence of Carroll and others who adopted his vision, the Baptist General Convention of Texas had approved the separation of the Seminary from Baylor University as well as its geographical removal. The report read, “We recommend that the Board of Trustees request the Convention to immediately incorporate the Seminary with its domicile at Waco until, if ever, it seems most to the interest of the Redeemer’s kingdom to remove it elsewhere. . . . The University will continue to furnish teaching quarters to the Seminary, temporarily, till suitable accommodations can be provided for it”¹⁷

Carroll made an appeal to Texas Baptists, and particularly to the other Baptist institutions for wholehearted approval and support. Recalling his labors on their behalf and punctuating the appeal with humorous references to age, Carroll intoned, “Some of the best years in the life of this Dean were wholly devoted to that

17 BGCT, *Proceedings* 1907: 45.

work, resulting in the securing of hundreds of thousands of dollars. Ah! How well he remembers the burden of the uplift of those yet dreadful years of toil, a toil commenced indeed when he was but a boy.” Continuing the appeal and the rhetoric of age, Carroll wondered “if schools redeemed by his labors will manifest their gratitude just now by a reciprocity of loving sympathy and co-operation extended to an old man covered with battle scars received in their behalf, engaged in the last and crowning work of his life.”¹⁸

The new school was chartered as The Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary by the state of Texas on March 14, 1908. In November 1909, a site in Fort Worth, Texas, was selected for the seminary. The first session on that site began on October 3, 1910. Carroll continued as its President and as the Professor of English Bible until his death in 1914.

Carroll’s eloquence seemed to flow from him as virtually a sixth-sense. His images fit the circumstance of the speech and the particular referent of his comments. When reporting for the Education Commission for Texas Baptists in 1899, he gave a commendation of cattlemen for their generous contributions. “To more than to any other class,” Carroll commended, “are we indebted to the big-hearted cattlemen for this great success.” “They are a generation to themselves,” he continued, asserting that “no man can know them and properly appreciate their sterling qualities who has not camped and hunted and traveled with them in their own habitat.” Carroll had done all of that and contended that “their ranches constitute an eighth wonder of the world.” Big in accom-

18 BGCT, *Annual* 1907: 49

plishment and understated in lifestyle, “Their habits are simple, their manners unaffected, their methods as direct as a rifle ball from a Winchester breechloader.”

Speaking of the contributions of ministers, Carroll gave a simple but impressive image: “Scantily paid for their work, pressed to the wall by stringent necessities, and who have, in this case, as in all others, paid even beyond their ability. There are none more liberal-hearted in contribution than the preachers as a class.” In the same report, Carroll set forth a vision for the amazing success of the monetary campaign to secure the well-being and stability of Texas Baptist schools. Unimpressive to some who may not share the same hope for these institutions and the conviction of their value for truth, Carroll sought to inspire each mind with a sense of the divine intervention in this work. “When success comes for God, feeble criticisms melt at its base like snow at the foot of the Andes, and still it stands. Mists of misrepresentations may gather around it and objections lie on its outskirts, but still it towers far up into a region where mists never rise and objections cannot collect. To one low down in the valley its lustre may be obscured for a day, but like the sun marching behind a pavilion of clouds, it will gleam forth at last all the brighter for the transient obscurity. We may commend it, therefore, to the confidence of all good men, and commit it to the safekeeping of God who achieved it.”¹⁹

When The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary sought to discourage the establishment of a seminary in the southwest, claiming that Southern Baptists

19 J. M. Carroll, *A History of Texas Baptists*, (Dallas: The Baptist Standard Publishing Company, 1923), 838–40.

had only one seminary, needed only one seminary, and desired only one seminary, Carroll responded in the keen fashion unique to him. Surveying the great advantages to Baptist and Kingdom life that would accrue through a faithful seminary, Carroll noted, "With a host of trained spiritual leaders, what a guaranty for unlimited progress, on all good lines. The expectation of such result is not the fancy of an undisciplined imagination, nor of the 'airy nothing of a dream,' but lessons of experience and the dearest leadings of divine providence." Not only was there a positive expectation in the prospect, but it was not arising as an accusation of failure in any other institution. "This seminary," Carroll assured, "was not established as a rival of any other. Its title to confidence," he continued to assure, "neither now nor hereafter should be sought in the real or supposed demerit of other seminaries." Such a motive would be unworthy of the call and content of divine revelation. "If it could be a mere negation, let it perish. If our Father wills it to stand it must be because there is need for it and merit in it."²⁰

For objections among Texas Baptists, Carroll also had an answer. "We respectfully submit with both humor and solemnity, that it is not violative of Divine prerogative, nor wrong per se, to teach a God-called man how to spell association, or how to make his verbs agree with their nominatives. . . . And since God himself has embodied the subject matter of preaching in at least two earth languages it can not be against his duty of exegesis to know somewhat of the laws of the language whose words he undertakes to interpret."²¹ If educational institutions

20 BGCT, *Proceedings*, 1907: 49, 54.

21 BGCT, *Proceedings*, 1904: 39.

seek to replace the Spirit in calling and gifting and the churches in setting apart, it would be blasphemous. “But for a God-called, Spirit-endued, and Church ordained preacher to fail in all necessary preparation possible to him is downright sin.”²² When some objected that Carroll proposed too much—the founding of this seminary would be a burden too great to bear, he responded, “You cannot overload a Baptist wagon. Each Baptist driver is sole judge of how much his team can pull. If he doesn’t want your freight, he won’t haul it.”²³

Carroll’s doctrine filled his mind and heart and oozed from every pore in his preaching and in his convictions about teaching the truth to others. Cranfill wrote that “He was a man of leonine courage and orthodoxy.”²⁴ He never failed in any moment or event of opportunity to insist on the inspiration of the Bible and its errorless status as a revelation from God. He viewed an assertion of the inspiration of Scripture accompanied by a demonstration of that fact to be vital to evangelism and in itself an act of evangelism. In the process of preaching on biblical inspiration and the power of the Bible in its presentation of the being and character of God, an absolute standard of right and wrong, an explanation of human sin in origin, present power, and outcome, its profitableness for conviction, for rectification, for training in righteousness, he declared, “If you close that Book; if you tear out its pages; if you shut out its light, in all the whole universe of God there is not revealed a way by which a sinner can be saved, not one in the world. ...

22 BGCT, *Proceedings*, 1904: 39.

23 BGCT, *Proceedings*, 1906: 43.

24 Cranfill, *From Memory*, 159.

take away the Bible, and there is not in all the literature of this world even a glow-worm of light on the subject of how a sinner can be saved, ... and there is not a glow-worm of light on the condition of the dead—on their eternal destiny.” Other pretended sources of revelation give “no more than the clatter of apes in a coconut tree on this point.” Having discussed the observable power of biblical truth in bringing spiritual life, Carroll set before his hearers the absolute necessity of receiving the biblical message of sin, death, and redemption by Christ.

What more do you want? What kind of a standard do you ask? By what standard of right and wrong will you regulate your life? By what forecast of the future will you outline your own destiny? Unto what oracle will you go to receive the truth concerning realms that lie in the outskirts of darkness beyond the grave? O Book of God—God-inspired Book—precious volume! All thy words are power, those infallible oracles, those living oracles of God to men! It makes my soul shudder within me when I hear any man speak slightingly of God’s revealed will.²⁵

He believed that its doctrines were clear; creeds, confessions, and systematic theology, therefore, arose from the discipline of careful and pervasive study of the text combined with a confidence in its coherence. A thorough synthesis of the relevant biblical texts on any subject would present a doctrine of that subject.

25 B. H. Carroll, *Revival Messages* comp. J. W. Crowder, ed. J. B. Cranfill (Grand rapids: Zondervan, 1939), 153, 155.

In a two-part sermon on “Creeds and Confessions” based on passages that held propositions that demanded creedal expression, Carroll said, “Now that is a creed. You say you don’t believe in creeds; you want religion and not a dogma. You have no particular creed. Well, I am sure then that you have no particular religion. Whatever a man believes, that is his creed and bound to be his basis for life.”²⁶ Carroll continued his strong affirmation that true Christianity necessarily involved holding and stating a creed. He compiled several plain doctrinal statements from Scripture, challenging the congregation to see the vital element of each doctrine to the faith of a Christian. In culminating the progression of creedal development, he finished with passages concerning the second coming of Christ. Then he asked, “Are you prepared to give up any item of this creed? Is it not a comprehensive one? What one of the elements would you blot out?”²⁷ He stated in no uncertain terms that a creedless man who rejected the use of confessions was useless to a denomination. Someone would be completely justified in rising in the general meeting and saying, “I move that the credentials of this man be withdrawn and the fellowship of this church be withdrawn.” Carroll further sealed his conviction on this matter by saying, “A man who believes nothing ought not to be a member of the church, and a preacher who has no creed has nothing to preach, and it will be a happy day when it is carried out just that way.”²⁸

It is no secret that Carroll loved Charles Spur-

26 *Pulpit*, 184.

27 *Pulpit*, 188, 189.

28 *Pulpit*, 189.

geon. He greatly admired Spurgeon's theory of pastoral training embodied in the Pastors' College. "I have always said," Carroll reported, "that Spurgeon's Pastoral College came nearer to the Bible idea of a seminary than any other in existence." His interest even extended to the list of donors published each month. "I used to read the monthly reports of the contributions and the list of donors that accompanied them," Carroll recalled.²⁹ Even more than that, Carroll looked at Spurgeon as the one who demonstrated "that the doctrine of a free salvation, none of works but all of grace, promotes the highest form of practical piety. ... His ministry and its results prove that not Arminianism but "The grace of God that bringeth salvation" leads to sober, reverent, holy, and righteous living.³⁰ As the verification of the power of all his doctrinal and ministerial convictions, Spurgeon's devotion to the Bible and its doctrines, as well as his courage in standing up to the doctrinal latitudinarians in the "Downgrade Controversy," inspired Carroll. During that time, in 1888, Spurgeon wrote words on this subject of creeds that without doubt influenced both the viewpoint and the verbiage of Carroll. "I am unable to sympathize with a man who says he has no creed," Spurgeon protested. "I believe him to be in the wrong by his own showing. He ought to have a creed. What is equally certain, he has a creed—he must have one, even though he repudiates the notion. His very unbelief is, in a sense, a creed. The objection to a creed is a very pleasant way of concealing objection to discipline and a desire for latitudinarian-

29 Carroll, *Interpretation: The Hebrew Monarchy*, 33, 34. See also Carroll's remarks in *Pulpit*, 64 – 66.

30 *Pulpit*, 71.

ism.”³¹

Carroll loved catechisms and the theory behind that instructive method. Often, in sermons and in his exposition of the English Bible (including this exposition of the Ten Commandments), he would arrange the pedagogy around specific questions. In his sermon, “Christ Died for Our Sins,” Carroll noted at the beginning, “Indeed, the most effective of all teaching is by catechism. Even when the answers accompany the questions, the method is admirable. As the student’s mind is as much disciplined by correct answers as by searching questions.” In this sermon to his congregation in Waco he devised an eight-question catechism “which you are asked to memorize—to get by heart.” In his exposition of the Ten Commandments, he specifically recommended “the Presbyterian catechism on the Ten Commandments” along with two other books. As cited earlier in this article, having posed a question about home education, Carroll, in his catechetical method of teaching, answered, “The Presbyterians excel the Baptists I am sorry to say. My mother was a Presbyterian. They make mighty good Baptists when you get them to come over. I learned the Presbyterian idea of family instruction from my mother.”³²

Carroll affirmed his commitment to a substitutive, propitiatory, expiatory atonement with as much clarity as the human tongue can achieve. He saw this as one of the great strengths of Spurgeon’s ministry: “His ministry has demonstrated the power of a gospel which

31 C. H. Spurgeon, “The Baptist Union Censure,” in *The “Down Grade” Controversy*, (Pasadena, TX: Pilgrim Publications, 2009), 45.

32 Carroll, *Exposition of Exodus*, 170.

insists on man's depravity, the necessity of regeneration, the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, and the undiluted doctrine of substitutionary, vicarious expiation."³³ The case of G. M. Fortune, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Paris, Texas, prompted Carroll to give public assertion of the critical, confessional, necessary affirmation of that doctrine as an essential of Baptist doctrine. According to a summary of court records, G. M. Fortune "by his preaching and published sermons and articles, denied the full inspiration of the Scriptures, and denied and repudiated the vicarious atonement of Christ for sinners and denied that Christ died for and instead of sinners, and became their substitute, and denied that Christ's righteousness was imputed to the righteous." As the summary of the case continued, the report affirmed, "all of which was contrary to the doctrines and teachings of the Baptist church, and contrary to the articles of faith, upon which this church was organized, and had continued to worship since its organization." Carroll had been questioned concerning his opinion of Fortune's views. He answered with no hesitation in his sermon on the death of Christ. "It is proper for me to answer many questions addressed to me concerning a widely circulated pamphlet emanating from the pastor of a Texas Baptist church." He had received copies of the sermon marked in various ways from several sources. "I regard it," he answered, "as a candid, outright, downright, audacious attack on the central, vital doctrine not only of the Baptist faith, but the faith of evangelical Christendom." None can doubt or be deceived about the heterodox author's position. Any church, therefore, following this thought "certainly loses from Baptist moorings and goes out to

33 *Pulpit*, 71.

the open sea under an alien flag. She cannot count herself a Baptist church, nor can she honestly be so counted by other Baptist churches.”³⁴ After more description of the certainty, clarity, and acuteness of the pastor’s writing, Carroll again affirmed, “It certainly puts it out of the power of any church to hold him in fellowship and remain a Baptist church.”

The opinions that Carroll’s friends had of him were amazingly consistent. Their fascination with his memory, his rhetoric, his impeccable style and power in debate, his massive amount of reading and recall, his energy, his strength, and his perseverance was palpable. More than any of that, however, was their undiluted conviction of his character, his godliness, his utter sincerity in his devotion to Christ and truth, his blood-earnest persuasiveness in evangelism, and his unreserved commitment to the biblical fidelity and doctrinal progress of Baptists. George W. Truett called Carroll “this titanic champion of the truth.”³⁵ J. B. Gambrell argued that “Carroll, Bible in hand, standardized orthodoxy in Texas” and “rallied the hosts of Baptists to the vital, ruling doctrines of the Holy Scriptures.”³⁶ The *Illinois Baptist* reported at his death, “He was a giant defender of Baptist faith and practice and was as loyal to the Bible as the infallible word of God as ever was patriot loyal to his country.”³⁷ George W. Truett could speak for all his generational peers when he said,

34 *Pulpit*, 202.

35 *Colossus*, 87.

36 *Colossus*, 91.

37 *Colossus*, 103.

He was a genuine man, true to the core of his being, sincere as the sunlight. I would have trusted my life in his hands, without hesitation or fear. As a friend, he was staunch, steadfast, ever inspiring, never failing. He had the moral courage of Knox and of Luther and of Elijah. When causes of great moment hung in tremulous suspense, awaiting perilous decision, his voice ever rang out like a trumpet that gives no uncertain sound.³⁸

EDITOR'S FOREWORD

An Interpretation of the English Bible is a twelve-volume exposition covering the entire Bible. Into this work B. H. Carroll, D.D. LL.D., President of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, poured the rich treasures of his scholarship. J. B. Cranfill, LL.D., edited the series, and Fleming H. Revell Company published it. With the consent of the editor and publisher, Doctor Carroll's treatment of The Ten Commandments has been condensed and carefully adapted and is offered in this form, primarily as a part of the Study Course for Sunday School Workers.

Doctor Carroll was eminent both as an interpreter and advocate of Christianity. Dr. George W. Truett said at the Ridgecrest Assembly: "B. H. Carroll was the biggest personality I ever met. He was greater than the presidents, greater than the prime ministers, the greatest man of his generation."

DIRECTIONS FOR THE STUDY OF THIS BOOK REQUIREMENTS

I. For Teachers

- 1. Ten class periods of forty-five minutes each are needed for the completion of a book.*
- 2. Teachers of classes are given, without special examination, the same award as is provided for the classes which they teach.*

II. For Class Members

- 1. The student must be fifteen years of age or older*
- 2. The student must attend at least six forty-five minute class periods. Where students attended as many as five class periods, an award can be granted only when the following method is used:*

Take the usual written examination on the chapters studied and discussed in class.

Study the remaining chapters of the book in accordance with the requirements of the individual method and hand the paper to the class teacher.

- 3. The student must take a written examination, making a minimum grade of 70 percent.*
- 4. The student must certify that the textbook has been read. (In rare cases where students may find it impracticable to read the book before the completion of the classwork, the teacher may accept a promise to read the book carefully within the next two weeks.)*

III. For Individual Study

Those who for any reason wish to study the book without the guidance of a teacher, will use one of the following methods:

1. *Write answers to the questions printed in the book, or*
2. *Write a development of the chapter outlines.*

If the first method is used, the student will study the book, and then with the open book, write answers to the printed questions.

If the second method is used, the student will study the book and then with the open book, write a development of the chapter outlines.

Students may find profit in studying the text together, but individual papers are required. Carbon copies or duplicates in any form cannot be accepted.

All written work done by such students should be sent to the State Sunday School Secretary.