BOOK REVIEWS


This volume is a fitting memorial to the "Incomparable Snowden" described on the flyleaf as "Snowden at his best." In the very selection of the writers the dual influence of Snowden on school and church is seen. Three of the contributors (David E. Culley, Frank Dixon McCloy and Dwight Raymond Guthrie) are academic men; three (William Wilson McKinney, William George Rusch and Walter Lysander Moser) are pastors (incidentally, this is probably the first symposium in history all of whose writers are Ph.D.'s!). Personally acquainted with their subject our authors supplemented first-hand knowledge by interrogating others who knew him, as well as consulting his own voluminous works, published and unpublished. Not only are the details of Snowden's life given, his various activities as editor, writer, teacher, preacher and thinker developed, but the little book, as comprehensive in its sweep as the man it magnifies, has suitable format also, fine printing, good indexing and clear photographs. Again, as with the former works of the United Presbyterian Historical Society of the Upper Ohio Valley, we are astonished at their ability to produce, in these days, such literature at the surprising price of about one penny a page, for the 221 page book costs a modest $2.95!

Dr. Snowden was virtually Mr. Pittsburgh Presbyterian. He was born in this area (Hookstown, 1852), went to school here (Washington and Jefferson College, A.B., 1875; Western Theological Seminary, B.D., 1878), held pastorates not far from Pittsburgh (Huron, Ohio; Sharon, Pennsylvania; Washington, Pennsylvania), edited The Presbyterian Banner, in Pittsburgh, taught at Western Seminary on the North Side (1911-1929) and died here in 1936. That he had a significance for the city beyond the merely religious is evident from his fascinating debate with Clarence Darrow, April 18, 1928 (pp. 186-191). His only son, Dr. Roy Ross Snowden, is likewise a Pittsburgh Presbyterian as well as a noted surgeon.

The Reverend Samuel Hopkins once wrote of Jonathan Edwards that he "was one of those men of whom it is not easy to speak with justice without seeming, at least, to border on the marvelous, and to incur the guilt of adulation." The same is true of Dr. Snowden.
If the reader of this tribute is tempted to think it occasionally smacks of the eulogy it is sobering to recall that Snowden's distinguished performance in so many diverse fields was, if not incomparable, well-nigh incredible.

Probably Dr. Snowden's greatest lasting significance is in the stance he took during the "Modernist-Fundamentalist" debate which greatly affected the Presbyterian Church, not to mention Christianity generally, during the twenties and thirties. As one pieces the picture together from the various essays in the present volume this composite seems to emerge: Snowden was neither a "Modernist" nor a "Fundamentalist" (cf. especially, pp. 192, 193). It is clear that he stood aloof from the most militant members of each group but the question remains, What were his own principles or doctrines? In this terminology he was clearly a Fundamentalist as John Haynes Holmes charged (p. 145), believing in the Virgin Birth of Christ (p. 193), the deity of Christ (p. 193), the resurrection of His body (p. 195), sin and grace (p. 16). On the other hand, he was a "Modernist" in his advocacy of scientific Biblical criticism and frank considering of latest views (pp. 178, 193). However, in this sense of "Modernist" J. Gresham Machen was more modernistic than Snowden because he was much more of a Bible critic, that being his primary field. And in the doctrinal sense Snowden was more of a Fundamentalist than Machen because theology was his primary field.

Why, then, was Snowden opposed to Machen if both were Fundamentalists in actual doctrines and both were Modernists in the use of critical scientific methodology? Of course, Snowden was opposed to Machen's separation from the Presbyterian Church. But so was Clarence E. Macartney, the late, distinguished pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh, who was identified, however, with Machen in the actual debate between Modernistic and Fundamentalistic theology. In other words, Macartney showed it was possible to agree with Machen on the doctrinal issues while disagreeing on the ecclesiastical. Macartney's stance was clear. But what was Snowden's? He seems to have agreed and not agreed. He seems to have stood, as far as his actual positions were concerned, on the side of the "Fundamentalist" and against the "Modernist," but this did not appear clearly. Why? Apparently, because Snowden confused the word "Modernist" with a methodology, disregarding its content. Nevertheless, the debate concerned content and not methodology as Machen's book, _Christianity versus Liberalism_, writ-
ten in 1923, showed. This issue is what Snowden preferred to ignore, at least explicitly. In ignoring it his influence was greater, for good or ill, than if he had attacked the problem. Probably more than any other one individual he has influenced the Presbyterian Church of this Valley to ignore the issue from that day to this. The great question is whether this issue will permanently ignore the Presbyterian Church.

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The author describes the construction and operation of that part of the Main Line of the Pennsylvania Canal, located along the Conemaugh and Kiskiminetas Rivers, on the south border of Indiana County and the north border of Westmoreland County, extending roughly from Johnstown to Saltsburg, a distance of about 45 miles. He discusses such subjects as the building of the canal east and west of Blairsville, the problems of Irish labor, freight services and passenger packets, canal boats, canal accidents and limitations, famous canal travelers, financial difficulties and final sale of the canal. All this is documented by many notes and references, including newspaper accounts published at that time.

This is followed by a series of tables giving data and costs on the various locks and other structures, rate of tolls, tolls collected, and a complete bibliography.

Several outstanding structures on the canal, such as the tunnel and aqueduct near Tunnelton, and an aqueduct near Bolivar, are described in some detail. Considerable attention is devoted to Blairsville which became a noted shipping center along the canal, with its many warehouses and headquarters for companies that operated the canal boats. Saltsburg also developed into an important town along the canal where, in addition to shipping salt, many heavy freight boats were constructed.