Edgar J. Goodspeed,

*As I Remember*

(New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), 315 pages.

Usually a reviewer reviews books of recent vintage. But, if you find a good read outside of the normal chronological range for book reviews, can you not review it and share it? Well, this memoir by the New Testament textual critic Edgar J. Goodspeed (1871–1962) certainly fell into the category of a good read for this reviewer. Goodspeed, who taught for many years at the University of Chicago, is probably best known today, if he is remembered at all, for his translation of the Scriptures and his work on the Apostolic Fathers. In this well-written memoir, Goodspeed especially highlights his academic career, as well his discovery of a number of rare Greek Bible manuscripts that formed the heart of what has become a significant manuscript collection at the University of Chicago (chapters 7, 14 and 15). He details the pleasures and challenges of doing a translation of the Bible (chapter 12), as well as the joys of travelling with his wife Elfleda Bond Goodspeed (1880–1941) (chapters 8, 10–11)—the memoir is actually dedicated to her memory.

Having become proficient in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew by his late teens, he went on to learn a number of other languages, including German, French, and Ethiopic. So it was that during his graduate studies at Chicago, he and some other students formed the Homer Club that met weekly to read the original Greek of Homer’s works: “one of us, carefully prepared, would smoothly and rapidly translate one whole book of the *Odyssey* or the *Iliad* while the rest of us followed the reading with the Greek text before us” (p.106). Again, in the summer of 1903, Goodspeed and his wife were in Toledo, Spain, where he was seeking to gain admission to a manuscript collection. He had to obtain permission from the Bishop of Toledo, but after a few minutes he found himself wrestling with how to express himself in Spanish, so he and the bishop “fell easily into Latin conversation which served our purposes perfectly” (p.137)!

The memoir is replete with the names of the many people whom Goodspeed met in the course of his long academic career, some still famous, others long forgotten. Not surprisingly, he was acquainted with many of the biblical scholars of his day, men like William Rainey Harper (1856–1906), Caspar René Gregory (1846–1917), A. T. Robertson (1863–1934), and Ernest C. Colwell (1901–1974). There is one name, though, I did not expect to find in this personal account of Goodspeed’s life and that was that of Andrew Fuller. But the Baptist theologian is mentioned right at the beginning of the book, for Goodspeed inherited a copy of his works from his grandfather, James Ten Broeke (1800–1855), a Vermont Baptist preacher. As Goodspeed puts it:

I have among my books Grandfather’s copy of *The Complete Works of Andrew Fuller*, famous English preacher of the turn of the century, upon whom Yale and Princeton bot conferred the Doctor of Divinity. The works had been published in Boston, in 1833, and my grandfather autographed his copies as of January 1, 1834 (p.20).

I wonder if Goodspeed read any of Fuller’s sermons, and, if he did, what he might have thought of his exposition of the Scriptures. Did his mention of Fuller’s corpus indicate his recognition of Fuller’s fame as a preacher being well-deserved?

Michael A.G. Haykin.