

IN MEMORIAM - DUNCAN B. FORRESTER

Duncan Forrester was President of this Society from 1999 to 2001. Tom Davidson Kelly, of whom an appreciation also appears on those pages, was 'his' Vice-President and should have been his successor, had not serious illness intervened.

My acquaintance and friendship with Duncan went back half a century before that time to student days in St Andrews. One summer we, and a few others, bought an elderly rowing boat, in which we ventured short distances out from the harbour. Irreverently he named it the Tommy Knox (after the Principal of the University) because it was 'short and tubby and didn't go very far'.

More formally, he was Duncan Baillie Forrester. His father was Professor of Practical Theology and Christian Ethics in St Mary's College. John and Donald Baillie were his mother's cousins and 'Uncle' Donald was his father's colleague as Professor of Systematic Theology. His book on 'The Theology of the Sacraments' can hardly have failed to have had influence on Duncan and on his Presidential address to our Society in 2001.

That address was entitled 'The End of Sacraments?', and was subtitled 'Sacramental Action and Discipleship'. It appeared in volume 38 of our *Record*. 'End' is, we know, a slippery word: 'termination' or 'purpose'? Some of the more rigid of our senior members, assuming that he had the former definition in mind, found even the raising of the question too much and my recollection is that his paper was received with some reservation. Very properly, however, for the holder of a chair of Christian Ethics and Practical Theology, he stated his purpose as being 'to explore some ethical aspects of the Lord's Supper and see if this deepens and enlarges our understanding of the Supper and its place in Christian life and faith in today's post-Christendom Church.'

I cannot claim to know of all of his publications in the field of our interest, but I do know that that was not the first. In the November 1979 issue of the *Expository Times* he published an article on 'Recent Liturgical Work in Scotland.' In the course of it he makes reference to South India where he served under the Foreign Mission Committee for a time. The widely

admired *Book of Common Worship* of the Church there was published during that time and, doubtless, influenced him – although, as Professor of Politics in Madras Christian College, liturgies were not a primary concern for him in those years.

A few years after his return to Scotland via the University of Sussex he and his New College colleagues, James McDonald and Gian Tellini, published *Encounter with God* (1983), an introduction to the study of Christian worship, and in the following year he and Douglas Murray edited *Studies in the History of Worship in Scotland* to which he himself contributed a chapter on ‘Worship since 1929’. To the *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology* (1993) he contributed an extended entry on ‘Worship’, and several lesser ones on related subjects.

After his retirement from his Chair he edited with Doug Gay a volume of ‘Studies and Case Studies in Theology and Practice’ entitled *Worship and Liturgy in Context*. (2009). I suspect, though I cannot find confirmation, that it was in connection with this volume that we held a meeting in Old St Paul’s Episcopal Church with a panel of which he was part. Sadly, there were already incipient signs of that long decline which was eventually to carry him away.

This somewhat dry and factual account is limited by the fact that I know nothing of Duncan’s teaching in New College on those matters which are of particular concern to this Society. Nor does it do justice to a friend of lively humour, quick mind and sensitive and engaging character.

JCS