

Professor Graham Stanton

After a long battle with cancer, courageously and calmly fought, Graham Stanton died on 18 July 2009. He had been successively Professor of New Testament Studies in the University of London King's College (1977-1998) and Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge (1998-2007).

Graham's service to SNTS was outstanding, and the countless friends he made within the Society were abundant testimony to his human qualities of courtesy, thoughtfulness and warmth. The combination of the deep personal respect and affection he inspired, the administrative efficiency with which he discharged his responsibilities, and his distinguished contribution to the study of the New Testament, made him much more than 'a safe pair of hands', though he certainly was that. Eminently trustworthy and fair in judgement, his time as editor of both *New Testament Studies* and the SNTS monograph series (1982-91) was one when a certain amount of *Angst* and pressure about publications in the scholarly world needed to be matched by Graham's characteristic combination of firmness, gentleness and perceptiveness.

On either side of his period of service as Editor there lay his six years as a notably effective Secretary of the Society and then, to the delight of his colleagues, his election as President for the year 1996-97. At the Strasbourg meeting he gave his Presidential Address on 'The fourfold Gospel', now reprinted in slightly revised form in his collection of essays, *Jesus and Gospel* (2004): Cambridge: CUP, and documenting his increasing movement into the early patristic period in order thus to gain new and fresh perspectives on the heavily trodden field of New Testament studies. Within that field, of course, Graham was especially well known for his meticulous and wide-ranging work on the Gospel of Matthew and, as the titles of several books attest, his making the term 'gospel' itself a recurrent preoccupation. In that respect, when some might think there was nothing new under the sun still to be said, Graham, like the learning teacher lauded by the writer of the Gospel, brought from his treasure new things as well as old.

Enormously proud of being the first New Zealander to achieve the high honours that came steadily throughout his career, Graham remained genuinely modest in bearing and outlook, and completely free of self-projection. There were three distinctions that gave him particular pleasure - the award of an honorary DD from his *alma mater*, the University of Otago, in 2000, the truly celebratory presentation of the Festschrift, *The Written Gospel* (2005), Cambridge: CUP, to mark his 65th birthday, and in 2006 the award of the British Academy's Burkitt Medal for Biblical Studies. By then, however, the clouds of terminal illness were becoming darker and heavier, but Graham never lost his zest or wavered in his fortitude.

Those whose lives were touched by Graham, either personally or professionally or both, share a sense of thankfulness and of grievous loss. In every sense, he brought the New Testament to life.

David Catchpole