

F.F. Bruce: A Tribute

JOHN WENHAM

The death of Frederick Bruce on September 11 1990 meant the passing of one of the giants of biblical scholarship. He and Matthew Black alone shared the honour of being presidents of both the Society for Old Testament Study and the Society of New Testament Studies. He had a marvellous memory, it being said with pardonable exaggeration that he read everything and forgot nothing. He loved languages and loved the Bible, delighting particularly in exegesis and becoming a great authority on Paul. Though not of a philosophical turn of mind, he was widely read in theology, and all he wrote was knowledgeable, lucid and sensible. He did much to restore respectability to Evangelical scholarship, as a result more of sound learning than of originality. He remained a humble and hard-working member of the Brethren, in spite of his wide range of friends in the academic world. He exercised a great influence on them and on Evangelicals generally, pointing them away from narrow interests. He was always suspicious of systematizing and often preferred to keep an open mind on controversial issues, as for instance on the fate of the lost.

I personally owe him a great debt, having known him for fifty-eight years, and having been at Cambridge with him. I had the honour of having a small share in his first New Testament commentary—I proof-read part of his *Acts*. (The only thing I can remember is that I saved him one mistake as a result of my knowledge of Palestinian geography!). He greatly encouraged us with his *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* at a time when our literature was almost non-existent. When he left classical studies for the biblical field, he began a prodigious output: nearly fifty books and countless articles and reviews. Equally important, he trained a great stream of research students. In his later years his views broadened slightly; for instance, he gave up the AD 62 date for Acts and placed it a decade or two later. I am therefore particularly grateful for the trouble which he took during the last year of his life in *twice* reading the MS. of my book on *The Redating of Matthew, Mark and Luke* and sending helpful comments. He was typically encouraging, generous and hard-working up to the end.

JOHN WENHAM was formerly vice-principal of Tyndale Hall, Bristol and Warden of Latimer House, Oxford.