

Robin Ernest Nixon

The sudden death of Robin Nixon, editor of this journal, on 18 October 1978, while entertaining some overseas students in the midst of a normal day, brought to a premature end a life already marked by high achievement and full of even greater promise. Aged only 46, he was just beginning to make his mark as Principal of St John's College, Nottingham, a post he had held for three years and in which he had exhibited every mark of great potential success.

As a New Testament scholar, author of *The Exodus in the New Testament* (Tyndale 1963), *Jesus Christ—Is He Truly God?* (Falcon 1967) and the SU Study Book on St John's Gospel (1968), together with contributions to symposia and journals, and member of the Society for New Testament Studies, he was coming to the point of submitting his doctoral thesis on St Matthew's Gospel to the University of Durham. At the same time he had been for fifteen months a member of the Church of England Doctrinal Commission, chaired by the Bishop of Winchester.

He had been a Winchester scholar, had read law and theology at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and had prepared for ordination at Ridley Hall, Cambridge. He was ordained in 1957 by Archbishop Michael Ramsey (then Archbishop of York) to the curacy at Holy Trinity, Hull. From 1960 to 1975 he was a member of the staff of St John's College and Cranmer Hall, Durham, where he had come finally to hold the post of Senior Tutor before departing to Nottingham. His years in Durham had endeared him to staff and students and to a wide circle of friends in the city, university and beyond, where his pastoral work and preaching were highly valued.

Six years ago he was invited to accept the editorship of *The Churchman* and to work with a newly-formed editorial board. His acceptance brought wide satisfaction, for he was known not only for his specialist biblical achievement, but for the width of his theological, philosophical and pastoral awareness and insights, of which he had given a clear public indication at the 1967 National Evangelical Anglican Conference at Keele. He combined the strengths of academic expertise with a deep commitment to pastoral and evangelistic ministry and their ecclesiastical structuring. He was welcomed, therefore, as one particularly qualified for the task of editing such a journal as this; and amply did he prove the rightness of that judgement in the years that followed. His own editorials, and the wise and skilful eliciting and correlation of articles on issues perceptively dealt with, sometimes in series, exhibited not only his

strength of evangelical conviction, balance of judgement, lively enquiry and practical concern; but at the same time a skill to plan with an eye to what would (or should) be matters of concern for the near future. His recent 'Lambeth' number in 1978, and his preparations for the 1979 *Churchman* centenary numbers, are evidence of his foresight and efficiency. For all this, his contacts and membership of such bodies as the Church of England Evangelical Council, Latimer House Council, the Council of ACCM, the Theological Colleges Staffs Conference and other conferences and gatherings, enabled him to be alert to issues upon which *Churchman* or its editor might have something to say. Not surprisingly, he saw this quarterly gain in esteem in the church at home and overseas, as well as in the Press—where it was referred to with respect from time to time—and indeed in important decision-making bodies like the General Synod.

Robin was a big man in every sense, and yet was also gentle and sensitive, humble and open. But he was firm and purposeful, with a well-ordered capacity to deal with business and administration. And there was always plenty of quiet humour never very far from the surface. His colleagues, not least those on this editorial board, grieve for the loss of so gifted, so able and so good a friend and editor; and, with many more, support his wife Ruth and the three girls, in their much greater loss, with their prayers. Meanwhile we ask for the continued interest of all our readers, and some prayerful remembrance as we seek for a successor.

G. J. C. MARCHANT
(Chairman of the Editorial Board)

Attention Please

New buildings at Nottingham

During Robin's three years' principalship the numbers in college built up from 108 to 134 and the staff from 10 to 12. New buildings are being erected to meet the need for additional facilities and, at the time of his death, the college was on the brink of an international appeal for £130,000 to pay for the new project. The family and Council of St John's wish to link the response to the appeal with tributes to Robin's memory and the new buildings will stand as a special memorial to him. Readers of *Churchman* who have not otherwise had an opportunity to support the appeal and who would like to do so should send donations to St John's College, Bramcote, Nottingham NG9 3DS.