

Hector Copland Macpherson, 1888-1956

By the death on 19th May 1956 of the Rev. Dr Hector Macpherson the Association has lost a distinguished member of long standing.

Born in Edinburgh on 1st April 1888 he inherited the gift of fluent writing from his father, Hector Macpherson, who was for many years Editor of the *Edinburgh Evening News*.

He graduated M.A. at the University of Edinburgh in 1912 and in 1923 was given the honorary degree of Ph.D. for his philosophic and scientific work. He took his theological training at New College, Edinburgh, where he won many academic honours.

After some years as minister of a church at Newmilns, Ayrshire, he was appointed lecturer in Natural Science at the Church College, Aberdeen, in 1925. Two years later he became minister of Guthrie Memorial Church, Edinburgh, where he soon became known as a forceful and thoughtful preacher. He remained minister in charge of this church until the end. For some time Dr Macpherson had not been in the best of health and following a period of rest and recuperation he had returned to Edinburgh to continue his church work, but collapsed while out shopping with his son.

He wrote many books, a good proportion being astronomical. His first book, *Astronomers of Today*, was published in 1905, when he was only seventeen, and was composed of a selection of articles which he had written for the *Edinburgh Evening News*. Other books on astronomy followed, those on the history of astronomy being particularly successful. He was active and still writing up to the last.

He was also well known, over a wide area, as a lecturer on popular astronomy. He lectured for a time at the Royal Technical College, Glasgow, and conducted for some years a class on astronomy under the auspices of the Extra-Mural Committee of Edinburgh University. Latterly he was a member of the panel of astronomy lecturers formed by the Robert Cormack Bequest Committee of the Royal Society of Edinburgh to give popular lectures on astronomy in Scotland. He was a Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society and of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

Dr Macpherson took an active part in the formation, in 1924, of the Edinburgh Astronomical Association (now the Astronomical Society of Edinburgh) and was President from 1926 to 1928 and again from 1952 to 1954.

Through his books, his lectures, and his personal enthusiasm Dr Macpherson did much to create and develop an interest in astronomy. In Scotland especially his impact in this field was considerable.

In 1917 he married Catherine Anne Chisholm: there are two sons and two daughters. Our sympathy is extended to Mrs Macpherson and the family.—

N.G.M.