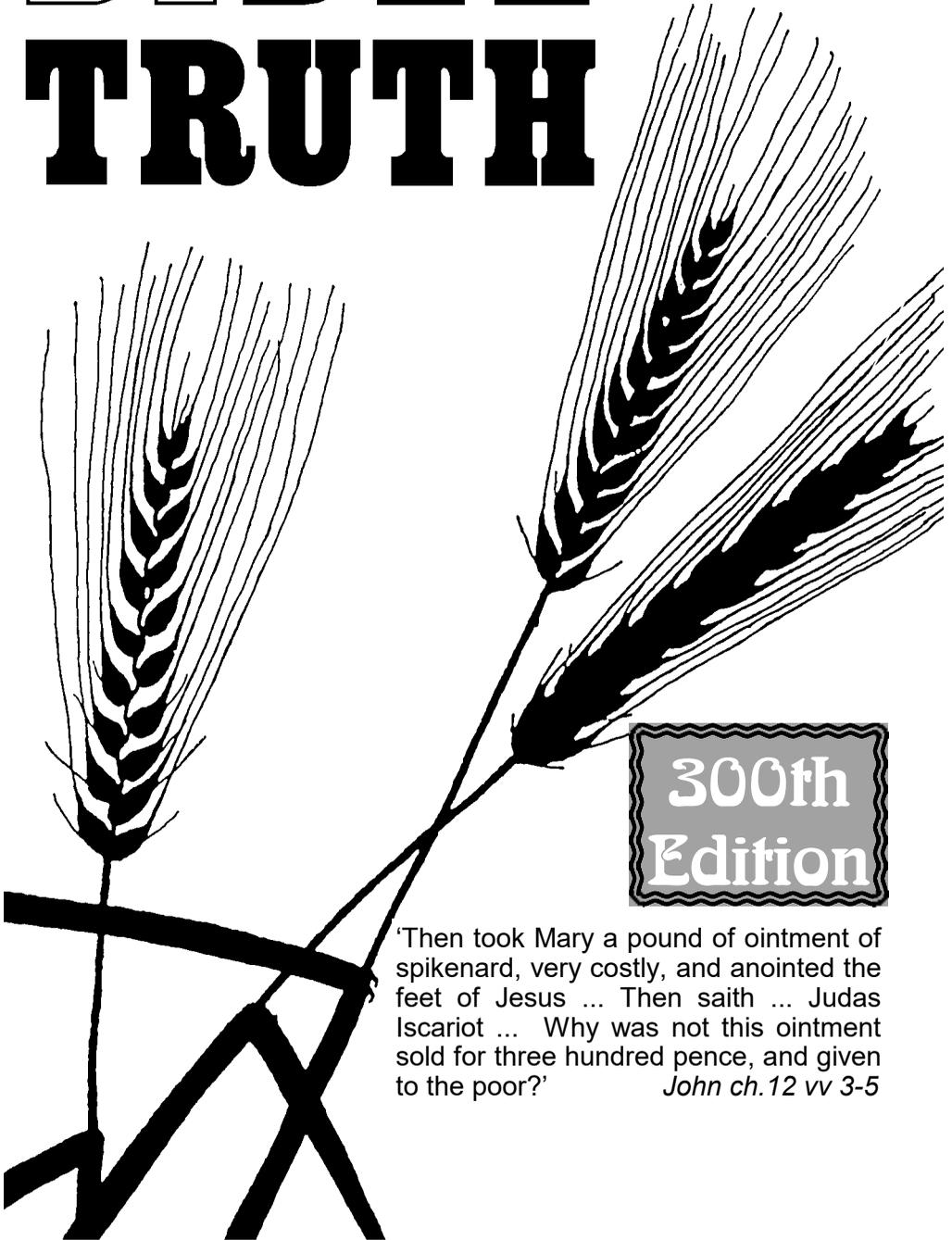


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'Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus ... Then saith ... Judas Iscariot ... Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?'
John ch.12 vv 3-5

Jon Ellis was a founder Trustee of the Fellowship and his wisdom with a gracious manner served us well in our early years. In the article below he gives his Impression and feelings of the funeral service and interment of the late Rev. C. S. McKelvey

**‘ABSENT FROM THE BODY
PRESENT WITH THE LORD’
By Jon Ellis**



To those who knew the Rev. Charles Samuel McKelvey (who was affectionately known as ‘Mac’) the afternoon on Wednesday 10th March 1976, was first one of sadness, which was soon to be replaced by joy, praise and thanksgiving to God for Mac’s life and witness. To me, there seemed to be little place for mourning, in spite of a sense of grief at such a loss of one of the Lord’s faithful servants.

The funeral service was held only a very short distance along the road from the B.I.B.T.F. headquarters, at the Chadwell Heath Baptist Church where Mac frequently worshipped, since moving to the district last December. It was therefore most fitting that the pastor of the church, the Revd Arthur Coffey, should lead in the opening service and later pay tribute, which he expressed with such insight that one felt he had known Mac for years, rather than only a few months. His tribute was to Mac's Christian character, and in particular his interest in people and of those young in years. With this and the tributes given by Dr Michael D. Bennett and the Revd P. E. Broad, who each witnessed to Mac's Lord and Saviour, one knew that all his gifts were God-given, because he allowed his Lord to fill his whole life.

One could not help being struck by the sincerity of all that was said in giving tribute to not only Mac but the Person he served. As the apostle Paul said, 'not I but Christ in me'. I believe this is the only tribute which Mac would have wished.

The few witty anecdotes during the service gave rise to amusement, which to any who did not know Mac may have seemed untimely, but such light relief was typical of the one who had gone to be with his Lord. It was a reminder of his quick sense of humour, particularly in time of adversity, when he never saw defeat but only victory.

In his address the Rev. George Thompson spoke so kindly and sincerely of all aspects of Mac's character, and perhaps we might have been saddened by the times when we may have wronged him, because of our own shallow faith and foresight, which never seemed to match up to the depth of Mac's. When Mac knew he was called by God to carry out a task for Him, he carried it out whatever the cost, and at times that cost has been very great. It was this very determined character that those who worked closely with him, at times found difficult to understand. In ministering the Word, George Thompson so well summed up Mac's Life when expounding on the instructions given to Timothy by the apostle Paul just before he departed this life.

The hymns, which included 'The Lord's my Shepherd', 'I cannot tell why He, whom angels worship' and 'The sands of time are sinking', were sung with feeling and fervour, particularly the second one, sung to the Londonderry Air, which was one of Mac's favourites; one felt this was his testimony in song.

The committal service at Barkingside Cemetery, a few miles away, was conducted by the Rev. George Thompson, just as the sun broke through the clouds, where it remained until the conclusion, to add further brightness and colour especially to the seventy floral tributes from his many friends. As the service drew to a close, many of the friends gathered close and broke into spontaneous singing of 'Teach me Thy way Oh Lord'.

By the passing of this great stalwart, perhaps the Lord will teach us to learn in a way that we were unable to whilst he was with us. It was only by Mac allowing his life to be daily filled with Christ's power that enabled him to be so effective in proclaiming the Word of God and the wonderful news of His Kingdom on earth. Because he loved his Lord so much he became so selfless in his concern for others, that he could only give of his best in anything he did, because it was, as unto his Heavenly Father.

Mac has left us now, only because God's timing is always right, and the future is in His hands.
