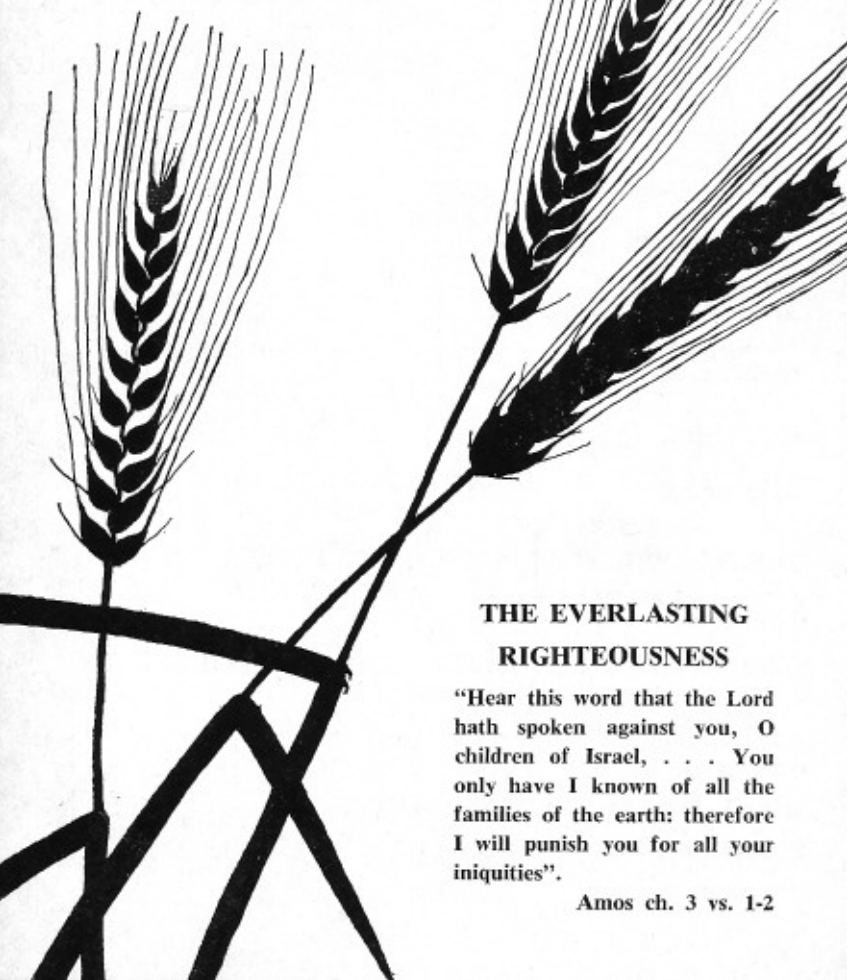


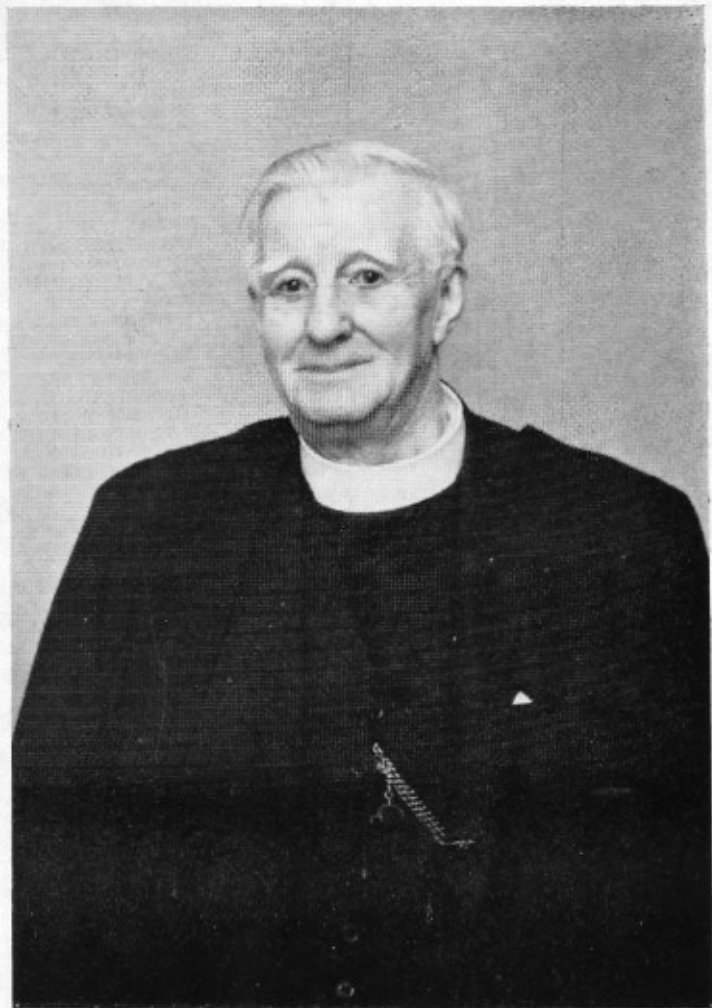
BIBLE TRUTH



THE EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS

"Hear this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, . . . You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities".

Amos ch. 3 vs. 1-2



The late Rev. Charles Samuel McKelvey
Founder Organiser of the British Israel Bible Truth
Fellowship, and co-editor of Bible Truth until his death
on 28th February, 1976.

THE REV. CHARLES SAMUEL McKELVEY

by

Dr. Michael D. Bennett

(President of the British Israel Bible Truth Fellowship)

Having to write this appreciation of the Rev. C. S. McKelvey (or 'Mac' as he was affectionately known to his friends) is the saddest duty which could befall the President of the Fellowship. Reading the many letters sent in by readers of Bible Truth in response to the news of his passing has shown me again and again that his writings were widely appreciated, and that he himself was respected and loved. So many told of his practical kindness and help, and of the value of his articles and teaching over the many years of his ministry (for Mac had been active in the Lord's work for more than half a century). Many who wrote had known him for far longer than I had, and others had known him more intimately than I, yet, by virtue of my office it falls to me to write about him here. Of course, I count it a privilege to be able to honour his memory in this way.

I knew Mac from almost as early as I can remember until his homecall about two weeks ago (as I write in mid-March). I thank the Lord that, together with two or three other members of the Council, I was able to visit him in hospital, and to be the last to pray and speak with him during the last hour of his earthly life.

Mac was a frequent visiting preacher at the churches of which my father (Pastor S. R. Bennett - at Gravesend) and uncle (Pastor C. W. H. Bennett - at Ash) were the pastors, besides often coming to take British Israel meetings in houses or public halls in my home town. I can clearly remember that he captured my imagination even as a small child, although at the time I did not know why. Observing him in later life I saw that he was attractive to all children.

and always made time for them despite the pressing timetable of his ministry to their elders. Moreover, although his teaching was profound Mac always managed to be understood by children too. His was a rare gift, for there are not many who can communicate the things of God equally to the very young as to those steeped in a lifetime's study of God's word. On reflection I can see that this was just one of the Christ-like attributes of his character and behaviour. Indeed, it may be that he had such a ready entry into the Kingdom of Heaven because he was equally ready to become as a little child, as to delight the adults with his ability. We can all learn something from his example here, I am sure.

It was also my privilege to give a few words of appreciation of Mac at his funeral service, and I would like to repeat here the verses which sprang to mind then concerning his life:

“And he (Jesus) gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”
(Ephesians ch. 4 vs. 11 & 12)

To me, Mac's life was a tangible proof of the fact that these verses are true, and that the Lord God is still giving these ministries to His people. Truly Mac was sometimes an evangelist, for during his life he led many to a knowledge and an acceptance of their personal salvation in and through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ shed on Calvary. Undoubtedly, he often did the work of a pastor, leading, helping, comforting, and cheering God's flock. I am sure he was a prophet. I only have to remember his preaching or to read his articles over again to confirm this fact. I have known none who saw more clearly through the eyes of the Bible prophets both to understand and to proclaim the fulfilment of their ancient words in our own generation and people. Yes, Mac was all of these, evangelist, pastor and prophet; by God's grace. But essentially, and predominantly I feel that Mac was one of God's teachers.

Visiting preachers usually spoke for up to an hour and seldom less than forty minutes at the church where I was brought up. This I well knew because during this time I had to sit still and be good. As I became a little older I used to spend much of the time reading those books of the Bible and parts of books which I noticed were seldom if ever mentioned by the preachers (I must confess this was partly because I supposed that these parts must contain some great secrets unsuited to children's eyes!). These parts of the Bible were readily identified in otherwise well-worn Bibles by the clean edges to their pages. Anyhow, I became filled with uncomprehending wonder at the beasts, trumpets and other wonders which I found there. It was especially Mac who, as a visiting preacher, opened these particular books and took the congregation on a guided tour of their mysterious contents with an assurance of understanding and a familiarity born all of faith. So, even as a child I realised that Mac must be a great Bible teacher. Later life showed me over and over again that I supposed correctly.

Over the years I have spent many hundreds of happy hours "sitting at Mac's feet", and indeed, I can truthfully say that these were among the happiest hours of my life. Many of these hours were spent in small gatherings in houses; others in larger meetings in churches, and some in very large congregations at High Leigh and elsewhere. Big or small, the size of the congregation made no difference to Mac. He always gave God's Word with equal force, the same amazing depth, and those intermittent sparks of unforgettable and inoffensive humour which characterised his preaching. His dedication to his calling was total, uncontrived and unailing.

To the stranger I am sure Mac appeared to have a magical Bible, for it seemed to open always exactly to any verse he wanted! The secret was open to those who studied him closely, and especially to those who sat close to, but behind him, while chairing his meetings. It was this. If Mac could not find the passage he wanted, he just quoted it word-

perfect from memory. He could quote whole books of the Bible in this way, and, he was equally at home with Zechariah as with St. John's gospel, and with Malachi as with Romans. This ability came not from the frequent repetition of the words, as with an actor who learns his lines, but it stemmed from the fact that Mac had made God's Word his word, and so it flowed effortlessly from his sanctified tongue. He knew of a truth that he had within him the living Word of God — Christ, his only hope of glory. So he surrendered his mind and tongue to the Spirit of God who spoke through all the prophets at the first, and who now spoke the Word to us through his minister McKelvey. And how we were taught! Somehow it was obvious that one was close to one peculiarly endowed with the ability to speak "the Word of the Lord" with power. Yet he never raised his voice and never waved his arms to increase the effectiveness of his preaching. It was sufficient that he just spoke the words.

He taught me to handle God's Word with great care, and to examine every word for its own, real and literal meaning, so as not to miss its present value by always foolishly putting its fulfilment in some other time and place. He taught me to apply God's Word to **our** world, to **our** nation, and to **my** life.

We should thank God for giving us a teacher such as Mac was. I think the saddest aspect of Mac's passing is that the wealth of Bible understanding and revelation that was his is now lost to us. It is not lost to him of course, for "the word of God, liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away. But the word of the Lord endureth for ever." (I Peter ch. 1 vs. 23-24). Mac's knowledge of the Word of the Lord was the possession of his soul and spirit, which are not dead, but are now rejoicing in the presence of the Lord in heaven. We know that God can give further gifts of knowledge, wisdom and prophecy to His people, and we believe that He will do so. Nevertheless, I am sure that all those who

know the value of spiritual light will join in mourning the loss to us of the ministry of those gifts which we enjoyed in God's servant Mac.

Mac was not a teacher by words alone, but by his life also. I am sure he taught me even more by his actions than by his preaching. He taught me, and many others, the meaning of patience and long suffering endurance by the way he nursed his wife Daisy for several years after she suffered a stroke which left her speechless and completely bedridden. During these years he maintained his work for the Lord as though tiredness was a word missing from his life's dictionary, yet he must have been close to exhaustion. He had previously suffered a stroke himself. In this he taught me faith. Mac's stroke affected his speech very considerably. Very soon after he had suffered his stroke I remember visiting him and hearing him trying to tell me that he believed the Lord would raise him up and restore his voice so that he could preach again. We can thank God that He did just that. Mac's voice was restored, and Mac lived to deliver hundreds more spiritual addresses which have helped thousands on their way to the Holy City. What an inspiration it was to hear him again for more than ten years after the Lord healed him. He had a new and deeper confidence in his God.

Mac taught me obedience to first principles. He could teach the Israel message, with its central theme of coming out, because he himself had repeatedly obeyed the call to separate himself. As Abram was called out of Haran, and obeyed the call, so Mac was called out of his grocery business many years ago, and he also obeyed. Mac could preach God's message to Israel today, "Come out of her, my people", with an intensity of zeal reserved only for those whose life has contained its own several acts of "coming out". Mac obeyed this call several times during his long life whenever Babylon began to encroach and he heard God's command to move again.

It must be clearly established that Mac was able to

teach so well because he had first learnt the lessons himself by suffering. Above all he taught the love of God in action. Despite all the painful attacks which came his way (and there were many besides those mentioned above) he was never bitter. Instead he allowed the suffering to produce sweetness. This was another attribute of the Lord Jesus Christ which he displayed. Mac was able to preach the love of God in the sacrifice of His Only Son with a depth of feeling and understanding because he lost his only child, a son, killed during the Second World War. The Lord could allow Satan to touch and take Mac's possessions, his family, and even his health, and like Job of old Mac would say, "The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord". In everything his eyes were fixed, not on earthly conditions, but on those things which are above, which we so often fail to behold steadfastly. Mac did not study situations and circumstances. He just kept on studying the Lord God and His Christ. What he saw there enabled him to transcend circumstances. So, when Mac taught us, he was just himself, and spoke those things which he had both seen and heard and knew to be true.

So often in history the Lord was careful regarding the names of His servants, as we British-Israelites are fully aware. We often say with meaning, "What is in a name?" I have often wondered whether Mac's name was witnessed by God, for his life certainly came up to it. Mac's full name was, Charles Samuel McKelvey. Charles means "strong man", and he was certainly that and very valiant for truth. Samuel means "heard of God" and was a name specially connected with the man who was a priest, a judge, and a prophet in Israel. Mac was a man out of the same spiritual mould. It is, I believe, not a coincidence that McKelvey could so easily mean, "the son of Levi". Mac or Mc means "the son of" in its Scottish or Irish usage, and Elvi is an expected mutation of Levi in the evolution of language. The house of Levi is held in an everlasting covenant with the God of Israel pertaining to their continuance as His minis-

ters. If we are Israel then we must expect and look for the fulfilment of this covenant in our people and generation. When all is revealed it will no doubt be found that, as God promised, so many of those who minister to us are MacLevis—the sons of Levi—in fact, as well as in spirit! As to Mac we cannot be sure, but it could so well have been.

In this appreciation I have concentrated on those things which Mac taught, and on the secret of how he was enabled to be such a fountain of life giving words to all who would listen. I believe it was no accident that one of his favourite hymns was:

“Teach me Thy way, O Lord
Teach me Thy way!
Thy gracious aid afford,
Teach me Thy way!
Help me to walk aright,
More by faith, less by sight;
Lead me with heavenly light:
Teach me Thy way.”

These words were so fitting to Mac's life that we sung this verse at his graveside, after his interment. We could sing it even there because we know and rejoice that Mac is even now in that heavenly light. Today, he is still being taught of God. He has joined the throng around the throne of God and is now part of that redeemed host of which he loved to speak so often in his preaching from the book of Revelation. Even now I am sure he would put no new words into our mouth. He would still encourage us to say and mean “Teach me Thy way, O Lord!” and then to obey the revelation which must follow.

“What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?
I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.
I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people.
Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.”

Psalm 116 vs. 12-15.

Impression and feelings of the funeral service and interment
of the late Rev. C. S. McKelvey by Mr. Jon Ellis

**'ABSENT FROM THE BODY —
PRESENT WITH THE LORD'**

To those who knew the Rev. Charles Samuel McKelvey (who was affectionately known as 'Mac') the afternoon on Wednesday, 10th March, 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 Rev. 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 Rev. 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.