

Accentuating the positive



Most of the stained glass windows in Edgbaston Old Church are Victorian, spanning the period of thirty years from the late 1850s to the late 1880s. Many have exquisite colouring - echoing the vivid palettes of medieval stained glass and Italian Renaissance art – and most have positive messages. Discard any notions you might have that Victorian Christian teaching was all doom and gloom; our EOC windows deliberately set out to inspire. One of the windows in our Lady Chapel is a particularly fine example of this; each of its two panels divided into three little tableaux. The subject is taken from chapter twenty five of Matthew's gospel, where a series of parables contrast good, sensible behaviour with that which is bad or unwise. The artist has selected verses 35-36, illustrating six phrases that offer a practical model for Christian behaviour.

Upper left panel of window: '...when I was hungry, you gave me food...' Matt. 25: 35



Middle left panel of window:

'...when thirsty, you gave me drink..' Matt. 25: 35



Upper right panel of window:

'...when I was a stranger, you took me into your home...' *Matt. 25: 35*



Lower left panel of window:

'...when naked, you clothed me...' *Matt. 25: 36*



Middle right panel of window:

'...when I was ill you came to my help...' *Matt. 25: 36*



Lower right panel of window:

'...when in prison, you visited me...'



The Victorian church-goer would have been familiar with these precepts from Matthew's gospel and also known the next few verses:

'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and fed you, or thirsty and gave you drink, a stranger and took you home, or naked and clothed you? When did we see you ill or in prison and come to visit you?' And the king will answer, 'Truly I tell you: anything you did for one of my brothers here, however insignificant, you did for me.' *Matt. 25: 37-39*