

LYTCHETT MATRAVERS CHURCH MAGAZINE

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S. Mary the Virgin

(A.D. 1200)

"He that keepeth My Commandments, he it is that loveth Me."
—St. John 14 : 21.

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The Rectory,
Lytchett Matravers.
December 16th, 1959.

My dear People,

I ended my letter to you last month with the thought of God as one who cares. Often in Holy Scripture He is so depicted, and we Christians know that it must be so, since He in the Person of His Son Jesus Christ came among us at Christmastide to seek and to save erring mankind. In the little play as announced below, which is to be presented by our Sunday School children in January, one of the Shepherds speaks as follows: "I have dreamed . . . was it a foolish dream? . . . that God Himself might some day reach a finger . . . leave high Heaven for earth, and come, perchance,

in human form to rescue us from death as, taking pity thou (Seth) didst save the lamb." The Gospel of Christmas is the most staggering news the world has ever heard, the "greatest drama ever staged", as Dorothy Sayers called it. God is One who cares. So I suggest for our New Year message just this. "I too will be one who cares." It was the Baron von Hugel, that great Christian scholar and thinker, who said "Christianity has taught us to *care*. Caring is the greatest thing. Caring matters most". In 1960 let me be one

1. *About God.* Who cares enough about Him as to make time to hold converse with Him privately in prayer and publicly in the worship of Christ's Church? Mr. Griffiths,

whom we welcomed as our Lay Reader on Advent Sunday, is full of religious enthusiasm. You expect your Priest to be one who cares. It's his job, however much he may fail. But in William Griffiths we have a *layman* who cares about God and His Beloved Son, who cares about God's honour and has no axe to grind at all. Enthusiasm is vital. For religion is caught rather than taught.

2. *About my neighbour.* One of the con-

God, from whom you came, to whom you will go, is to care about others. When Cain killed Abel in that ancient Old Testament story, God is represented as saying to him "Where is thy brother?" Cain replied "Am I my brother's keeper?" The implied answer is Yes. So we have to care about the *physical* welfare of others, and in this World Refugee Year the call is unmistakable, with two-thirds of the world's population under-nourished. One simply dare not grumble or waste in view of the world suffering today. If only we in the West were willing to tighten our belts for the sake of the starving East. That would be caring indeed. And, too, we have to care for the *spiritual* welfare of our neighbour. The Baptised cannot be reminded too often that they are the Church, and as such must seek to influence the indifferent. Those who try to practise their Churchmanship must humbly care that to the vast unthinking multitude the Church is irrelevant. Though Baptised, the multitude is unaware that they are the Church, called out thereby to belong to the Lord, to be the People of God, the Beloved Community.

3. Then, too, we must care about our own souls. We are charged to love our neighbour *as ourselves*. Evidently, then, it is right to have a love of one's own soul, one's own sanctification. Certainly God is one who careth for your soul, as Francis Thompson, the poet, who was born December 12th, 1859, brings out so vividly in his poem "The Hound of Heaven". Boldly he likens the pursuit of God for the human soul under the figure of a Hound:—

"I fled Him, down the nights and down the days,
I fled Him down the arches of the years,
I hid from Him . . .
From those strong feet that followed after.
But with unhurrying chase
And unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat . . . and a voice beat
More insistent than the feet . . .
"All things betray thee, who betrayest
Me."

He died young after a tragic life. But his poem immortalises the truth that God is a God who cares.

Your sincere friend and Rector,
JAMES N. MAHON.

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The little play "The Inn of the Star" will be presented by our Sunday School children in the Victory Hall on Thursday and Friday, January 14th and 15th, at 7.30 p.m. Admission by programme, 1/6. A collection at the door for expenses to enable all proceeds of this play to go to help the cause of refugees in this Refugee Year. Carols by the choir of the Day School and instrumentalists will interperse the play.

The result of Fur and Feather was £18 1s. 10d. Best thanks to Mrs. Head and her helpers and those who kindly gave refreshments.

The Sunday School party, usually at Christmas, will be postponed until January 30th—a Saturday—thus enabling our teachers to be present. I am sure that those who have helped Mrs. Head in past years over this event will do so again, both in service and in kind. Party begins at 3 p.m.

The Young Wives' children's party will be in January and the Mothers' Union party on the third Wednesday. So there will be a galaxy of parties.

I hope you will like the Diocesan Leaflet and the message it brings from our own Bishop. It may be he who will come to us for the Confirmation on February 7th at 3 p.m.

We send a message of sympathy to Mrs. H. J. Rickett on the death of her husband. She has brought up a very large and united family; most, if not all, have known and been known by St. Mary's in past years. They will be a great support to her in the loss she feels at her husband's death after 55 years of married life.

As I write we look forward to two Carol Services, one in the Village Hall prepared by Mr. Woodward and his staff, and the other also carefully prepared by Mrs. Pink. I hope both will be an inspiration to all who take part in them.