

Had Luke never existed, we'd be so impoverished.

No angel called Gabriel surprising Mary in Nazareth.

No visit in haste to Judea to see Elizabeth, six months gone,
no realising God's rescue was on the horizon.

No Magnificat, no Benedictus, no Nunc Dimittis.

No visit to Bethlehem by decree of Emperor Augustus,
no Mary wrapping her first born in swaddling clothes,
and laying him in a manger, no no room for them in inn.

No shepherds out in t' fields watching their flocks by night,
terror-struck by angels announcing God was in town.

No 12 year old Jesus tarrying behind in Jerusalem
no listening to Judaism's scholars, putting them on the spot.

No parable of the Good Samaritan, no priest or Levite,
no Samaritan coming to the rescue of the wounded Jew,

with his oil and his ass and two day's wages.

No parable of the Prodigal Son,

no father peering out day after day

longing for his boy to return home,

no spotting a speck on the horizon no running to greet him,

no elder son peeved by his father's generosity.

No joke as a teacher asks her class:

'Who wasn't happy when the prodigal son returned?'

'Please, Miss, the fatted calf!'

No gracious Jesus pardoning to the end.

No Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.

No penitent thief.

No Remember me when you come into your kingdom.

No Today you will be with me in paradise.

No Father into your hands I commit my spirit.

No grieving disciples plodding along the Emmaus road,
no stranger making their hearts burn within them,
no recognising him at the breaking of the bread,
no racing seven miles back to Jerusalem thrilled by Easter.
No Acts, No disciples growing in number,
no sharing all they had, including a fair few arguments!
No Paul blinded on the Damascus Road taking the Gospel
to the ends of the earth, reaching us even here.

As we mark the immense riches of Christ that Luke brings,
imagine for a moment an 8am service 2000 years hence,
the priest waxing lyrical not over St Luke but over St You,
and how impoverished our world would be
without the immense riches you had shared.
Such a good Samaritan, such a prodigal parent, such grace.
No pressure. So let your light so shine before men...